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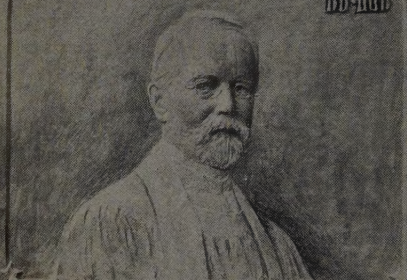
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# Closed Door.

W. Walsham How.

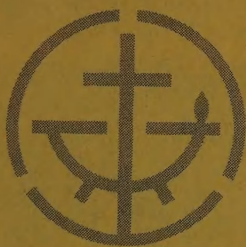
Charles Wesley Hittingwell

MDCCC



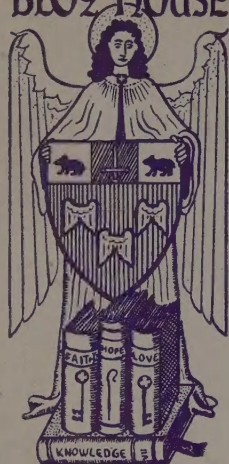
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THEOLOGICAL STUDY AND  
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# The Closed Door

*“Close the door from sight and sound  
Of the busy world around;  
And in patient watch remain  
Till my Lord appear again.”*

SV  
4832  
H6

# The Closed Door

Instructions and Meditations given  
at Various Retreats and  
Quiet Days

By

William Walsham How, bp., 1823-18  
First Bishop of Wakefield

London  
Wells Gardner, Darton & Co.  
Paternoster Buildings



1898



## Note

SOME four years ago my dear father gave me his books containing manuscript notes of the Addresses delivered by him at Retreats and Quiet Days, in order that I might write out the Addresses in full. Each Address, as it was written out, was revised and corrected by my father. It was his wish that on his death these Addresses should be published.

The Addresses are arranged in order according to the subjects dealt with; and it will therefore be found that in some of them there is a repetition of thoughts, and sometimes of whole sentences, which occur in the immediately preceding Addresses.

The Bishop left a list of over eighty different parishes in England in which he had conducted

Retreats and Quiet Days. How very many must have learned deep lessons of spiritual life from these times of quiet devotion! It is with an earnest prayer that others may learn similar lessons from these printed pages that this book is now published.

HENRY WALSHAM HOW.

MIRFIELD, *All Saints' Day*, 1897.

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# The Closed Door

## I

### Introductory

ABUNDANT occupation is a thing to thank GOD for. Hard work, capacity for constant labours, ability to be always about our FATHER's business—all this is good. It saves us from many temptations, and is far more wholesome than much leisure.

There is some truth, though also some error, in "Laborare est orare." JESUS went once into a desert place to pray. But multitudes followed Him; and He spent the day in healing, and teaching, and feeding. He gave up the prayer for the present. He said not, 'I must pray. Ye must wait.' He was the "Servant of all." And so are we. Oh! how could the Good Shepherd rest when all those sheep were scattered there? And how can we His under-shepherds rest when our flocks too are on the plain, perishing for lack of food, dying of all the fell diseases of sin?

Yet there is peril as well as blessedness in

abundant occupation ; in *our* occupation, perhaps, most of all. It *ought* to occupy, not the hand alone, not the head alone, but the heart and the soul. Yet, oh ! how easy it is to make it all outward—not, perhaps, of intention, but through habit. A busy head and an idle heart ! A full hand and an empty soul ! How common ! Even in the more spiritual part of our ministerial life—in the Daily Prayer, in our frequent Communion—how often do we fall into routine ! I once saw in a paper<sup>1</sup> a letter from one who said that he never heard without a shudder of any one introducing Daily Prayer in his Church, for it was the substitution of the outward and formal for the inward and spiritual. Now, there is great falsity in this. Yet, sad and hard and untrue as it is, it has its root in a truth, so it may well serve to warn us. In it is shown the real danger besetting not this only, but all our life and work. And if there is such a danger in our spiritual acts, how much more in that part of our ministry which of necessity is busied with somewhat petty details, or has in it much that is secular. It cannot, however, be helped. There is for the most part no one else to do these things, and they must be done. Blessed are they who press the spiritual element into the forefront, and show that they hold themselves first of all shepherds of souls !

<sup>1</sup> *The Rock*, November 1874.



Shepherds of souls! But the shepherds have souls too. "Take heed," said St. Paul to the elders of Ephesus, "unto yourselves and to all the flock": unto "*yourselves*" *first*, then unto the "flock." So, too, "Take heed unto thyself and to the doctrine" (1 Tim. iv. 16): "*thyself*" *first*, then the "doctrine." Ah! have none ever cared for the souls of the flock, and neglected their own souls? Have none ever led others to green pastures and still waters, and left their own souls in the desert? Have none ever had to say, "They made me the keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept"?

Mark that it is not as though our own souls needed only what others need. We need more. How can we lead souls to heaven unless we are familiar with the way? Surely the pastor should be able to say to the sheep something better than 'Let us try and find the way together.'

"He goeth before them." Aye; and except he go before, in prayer, and love, and holiness, and spirituality, and heavenly-mindedness, he will not lead many to heaven.

Mr. Heygate, in his beautiful "Ember Hours," says, "Our ministry cannot be a failure unless we ourselves are the same." He touches the spring of the whole matter there. Many a parish priest laments over his failure. May it not be that he is not looking at the right place?—that while he

speaks of his ministry as a failure he might in very truth rather speak of himself.

Souls are looking to us parish priests for help and guidance as they have not been doing for generations in this land. The buffetings of sin and infidelity are deepening the spiritual life in many; and they crave help—help to conquer sin—help to gain holiness: not one or two here and there, but thousands; not alone women, who are more emotional and less independent, but strong men—working men—men of business—gentlemen. Be brave, and dare to open the question of religion to one of these. I cannot promise that you will always find a response; but you will far oftener than you would think. Well, shall one say to me, ‘Tell me how to love God—teach me how to pray—give me some help to get rid of my sins, and to grow better,’ and shall I answer, ‘My friend, I would if I could, but I want all this myself’? I should like to be able to say, ‘My friend, I have not gone far on the road you want to walk upon, but I have been trying to walk in it, and perhaps I can help you.’ Think of a sinner appealing to his clergyman, who is dumb because he knows that he himself has yet to start.

Aye, but, after all, it is for our own souls’ sake that we are here to-day. We want to grow in grace, to increase in habits of devotion, to

tread the way of holiness, first of all, that we may not, having preached to others, be ourselves castaways.

“The primitive Bishops,” says Bishop Wilson, “had places of retirement near their cities, that they might separate themselves from the world; lest, teaching others, they should forget themselves; lest they should lose the spirit of piety themselves while they were endeavouring to fix it in others.”

I assume we all long to be nearer to God, nearer to JESUS, nearer to heaven.

So we have met here. And we ask, ‘What have we met for?’ Not to be taught new things. No: we have met to commune with our souls and with God. We have come together that we may put on one side for the time our cares and interests and occupations, and be solely busied with our eternal welfare. We want to find a little space for uninterrupted devotion. We know how our daily duties intrude themselves. It is very hard to keep them even out of our prayers. We want now to “come apart into a desert place and rest awhile,” for there are in our daily life “many coming and going.” So we would “rest awhile” from *these* at least. We come to be with Jesus—Θεῷ σχολάζειν, as St. Ignatius says. Let me give you a few hints.

1. *Realise the presence of God.* Put your-

selves by conscious act in His presence. Open your whole soul to Him. Lay yourself bare in the light of GOD. This is the root of all true spiritual worship. Lose this sense of GOD's presence as seldom as possible. Say, 'O my GOD, I kneel here before Thee. My spirit would hold commune with Thee. I would shut out all but Thee. I would close the door of my closet on the world, and open the windows of my soul to heaven. Make me feel that Thou art with me—very near to me; nay, *within* me. Fulfil Thy dear Son's word, "We will come unto him." FATHER, SON, HOLY GHOST, come to me. Before Thee I unveil my being. Shine upon me with Divine illumination. Before Thee I empty my soul. Fill me with Thyself.' Thus would we speak.

2. *Spend all the time you can in devotion—all the time you can happily and naturally.* Do not make a burden and strain of it. When we realise GOD and our souls, how all the old acts of worship come out! self-examination, confession, praise, prayer, intercession, thanksgiving—all these, in turn, rise unbidden.

One old clergyman, who had never been to a Retreat before, told me that in saying the LORD's Prayer privately in church after one of the addresses, its every word came out with a fulness and grandeur and richness of meaning such as he had never before known.

But few can spend much time in devotion without the use of books. Use any helps—all helps you can. If you can spend but little time in devotion without such helps, be not discouraged. We are but children in devotion, all of us. Then there is the practice so recommended by all writers on devotion—Mental Prayer. It is hard; but surely it is less hard at such a time as this. It consists not in words, but in thought; not in definite petitions, but rather in realising GOD, in placing the soul in an attitude of silent adoring expectation. It is receptive, rather than active. It is a sort of listening for GOD's Voice. If such pauses come to us in our more formal devotions, it is well. Do not think such moments are wasted. Perchance GOD will then speak to us in His "still small voice."

3. *Watch for opportunities of resolutions.* GOD may put such into your mind. Such a time as this should not pass without *some* resolution being made. It is such resolutions which make a Retreat practical, and save it from the peril of mere excited emotions evaporating in sentiment. We must come out of our Retreat better than we go in, resolved to walk closer with GOD, to be more wholly His. Our resolutions may be of varied sort—*e.g.* to spend daily a longer time in prayer; to deal more faithfully with souls; to

conquer some ill habit; to aim at some new grace. Do not make any hasty resolution. Weigh it well; pray over it; take it on the last morning and offer it to GOD as you kneel before His altar, and ask Him to accept and bless it for the sake of the one mighty Sacrifice, through which alone all others avail.

I would end by quoting the words of a holy writer, who, though not of our Church, has been a teacher of saints:—

“O admirable solitude! secret chamber of the Most High, where only He will give audience, and not elsewhere, and speak to the heart of the soul! O desert changed into Paradise, for there only does GOD vouchsafe to be seen and spoken with! ‘I will turn aside and see this great sight.’ But if thou wouldest arrive thereto, enter barefoot upon this ground, for it is holy. First, put off thy shoes from thy feet, that is, the affections of thy soul, and leave them bare and free: carry neither purse nor scrip upon this road; for thou art to desire no one thing of this world: neither salute any man; but fix thy whole thoughts and affections in GOD alone, and not in creatures: leave the dead to bury their dead; and go thou alone to the land of the living, and let death have no part in thee.”<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Scupoli, “Spiritual Combat.”



## II

### Jacob's Vision

*(For Holy Communion)*

SHALL we meditate upon Jacob's wonderful vision? It seems to suggest many thoughts which may help us in entering upon our time of quiet devotion and withdrawal from the outward occupations of our busy life.

First of all, who is this of whom we are to speak? He is no saint of God. We can hardly think of him but as most unworthy of any special favour. He had sinned grievously, and was flying from the merited wrath of the brother whom he had wronged. But what if God reserved His blessings for the worthy? Is it not a great comfort and encouragement to know that God maketh His sun to shine upon the just and upon the unjust, and giveth oftentimes far more than we desire or deserve? For if Jacob was undeserving of the blessing he received, surely we are no less so. We will hope, then, that, undeserving though we be, God may, here in our moments of

secret communing with Him, in our prayers, and above all in our sacraments, reveal to us some of the blessed truths of the unseen world. Jacob was no saint when GOD permitted him to see the Vision of the Ladder, but GOD would train him up to saintliness. And the very foundation of saintliness is faith in the unseen—the power of realising the eternal things of GOD. “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Perhaps through some such revelation of His presence, GOD may be about to lead some one of us, His most unworthy servants, up to higher things, to greater self-renunciation, to more persistent efforts after holiness.

1. So our first lesson from the Vision of the Ladder must be the realisation of the unseen, the abiding consciousness of the presence of GOD. We will pray GOD that the eyes of our souls may be opened, as were the very bodily eyes of the prophet’s servant in Dothan, so that we may know how the hosts of the LORD compass us round about. It is better to believe too much than too little. This sceptical age bids you believe only what you can see. The Bible tells you, you see very little of what *is*. How glorious to believe, as we are taught by that holy word, that we are “come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jeru-



salem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to GOD the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to JESUS the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel."

Yes, we are come—we are united in a holy and blessed communion and fellowship—to a very universe of intense and vivid life, of which our senses can tell us nothing. To doubt of angels and spirits is not far from doubting of GOD. Lo! we are set in the midst of two great worlds of being—the visible and the invisible, the material and the spiritual; and one great end and purpose of a Retreat is to open the soul to the world of spirit, and to bid it, at least for a brief time of quiet communing with GOD, "look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen."

2. Next, let us see in Jacob's vision an emblem of the place of prayer. There are the angels ascending and descending. May we not think of them as bearing up our prayers and praises, our spiritual sacrifices, to the throne of GOD, and bringing down GOD's gifts and blessings to us? I do not, of course, mean that this is literally so. We know not how GOD uses those heavenly messengers, those *λειτουργικά πνεύματα*, whom He

sends forth to minister to the "heirs of salvation." Perhaps it is best not too curiously to inquire. There is no need to dwell on the intermediate agency, even if such there be. We would rather see in the vision we are regarding, an emblem of ascending prayers and intercessions, and descending gifts and blessings, than any revelation of the mode of angelic ministration. As we kneel here we will try to realise that GOD is looking down from His throne (I speak after the manner of men), hearing and answering prayer. We would shut out the world; we would recognise an open way between earth and heaven, and say, "Surely the LORD is in this place."

3. But why confine our thoughts to the place of prayer? May we not take a wider, grander outlook? Is it only of a temple at Jerusalem, or of a Mount Gerizim, that we would ask and think? Nay; the open canopy of heaven, under which Jacob rested, was no church dome; the stones of his pillow were not yet consecrated for a memorial. I am not one to despise the gracious reverence, the hallowing influences, of the consecrated House of GOD. But I can read a wider lesson still in this wondrous story. Every place becomes a Bethel. The whole world is GOD's House. Wherever GOD's servant is, *there* is the ladder set up between earth and heaven, *there*

is the immanent Providence, *there* is the open way, *there* are the angelic ministries. If we were not so blind, we would see the true sacredness and glory of the world as the footstool of GOD. We are sleeping at the foot of the golden ladder; and the way from earth to heaven is open, not for angels only, but for us.

4. JESUS says, "I am the Way." "No man cometh unto the FATHER, but by Me." Was He thinking of this when He said, "Hereafter ye shall see the heaven open, and the angels of GOD ascending and descending upon the Son of Man"? Is He, then, the mystic Ladder? Even so; for behold how fitly He may be made known to us in this beautiful figure. Is it needful that the Ladder should touch the very throne of GOD? Lo! He is Himself GOD. Is it no less needful that the Ladder should rest upon earth, if poor weak children of earth are to set foot upon its lowest rounds? Lo! He is also Man. The Ladder falls not short at either end. It touches earth and heaven. Yes; by Him all prayers and praises go up before the throne of GOD; by and through Him all Divine gifts and blessings come down upon His servants as they wait below. By and through Him we will ourselves ascend in spirit now; that by and through Him we may ascend in all the fulness of our changed and glorified being hereafter.

Then, my brothers, as we kneel here in this solemn hour we will think of the golden ladder, we will realise the open Way. Many a lowly confession, many a fervent prayer, many a glad thanksgiving, many an act of joyous praise, shall be carried up, and laid before the footstool of GOD. And many a gleam of pardoning mercy, many a thought of strength and hope, many a sense of the holy presence of our GOD, shall descend upon us. Especially as we draw nigh to the altar, and make memorial of the great Eternal Sacrifice, we will pray that the eye of faith may see heaven open, and Jesus Himself, who is "the Way," winning us upward with a blessed "*Sursum corda*," and pouring into our souls, as they lie open to receive whatsoever in His bounty He may bestow, His love, His grace, His peace—Himself. O Thou who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, show us the open pathway to heaven; lead us upward to the throne; teach us new lessons of Thy Eternal Truth; and be in us Everlasting Life. Amen.

### III

## Consecration to God's Service

(*For Holy Communion*)

I Chron. xxix. 5: "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?"—  
*Evening Lesson for St. Matthew's Day.*

ARE *you*, my brothers? But you have done so, all of you, long ago; you have given to God yourselves, your lives, your powers. Aye, and you have renewed the offering again and again. You have done so in Holy Communion, and in the secret commemoration of your Ordination. Well; but is the consecration complete? Is there no half-heartedness, no unreality, no withholding the full cost of the self-sacrifice, no keeping back part of the price? Could the offering be more unreserved, the self-oblation more complete, the consecration of *all* to God more absolute, more final? "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?" Might we not make this a day of consecration—perhaps rather of re-consecration—aye, of very

deep, full, real, ungrudging dedication of self to God? I suppose it was these words, and their outcome in the willing sacrifice of worldly wealth by the Apostle, which caused the choice of the evening lesson for St. Matthew's Day.

The margin reads for "consecrate" "fill his hand"—'Who is willing to fill his hand with service this day unto the LORD?' I suppose it is not in the sense of 'take in hand,' having his hands full of work for the LORD, but fill his hand that he may take it and offer it unto the LORD. It is equivalent to 'make a large and liberal offer of service.'

Now, self-oblation is at the bottom of all true service. One may give of his worldly wealth, spending freely his earthly means in God's service, as the people to whom David bore witness that they had offered willingly unto the LORD. Another may give of his time, his labour, his energy; devoting himself to his work, a laborious parish priest, a diligent worker. Another may use his intellectual powers in the defence of the truth and instruction of God's people. But none of these things are really blest without self-sacrifice. You remember St. Paul's commendation of the Macedonian way of giving? (2 Cor. viii. 5): "This they did, not as we hoped, but first gave their own selves to the LORD." Yes, this is the true way. Is this the ground and strength of

all our work for GOD? Is it all embraced and gathered up in the larger gift and consecration? There are times when we lack interest, grow restless, relax our efforts, work against the grain. What is the secret? May it not be just the lack of real consecration of self to the LORD? Outwardly, in the laying on of hands, by most solemn vows, by separateness of life and calling, we have consecrated our service unto the LORD. Inwardly, how is it? I do not doubt the earnestness and reality of the first intention. Yet there may be a dedication of self, which, though not unreal or hypocritical, is transient, shallow, evanescent. For this act is one of these that consists of both present force and meaning, and continuous prolongation. It is a definite act issuing in an abiding state. It *ought* to be the inward spirit and meaning of the self-dedication of Ordination. There *ought* at that most solemn time to be an inner act of self-oblation which should cover all the after-life. Alas! it is not always so—or only partly so. Like all other acts of self-dedication—such as in Confirmation, or in Holy Communion, or in the secret and solemn laying of one's self down at the feet of GOD in an hour of great sorrow, or of great mercy, or of deep emotion—it needs frequent renewal. Through the infirmity of the flesh, the first great act, which should govern the life and being, is imperfect, incom-

plete, subject to decay and lapse. And when shall we renew the failing strength, when tighten the slackened bow-string, when recover the waning force, if not at such a time as this? "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?"

There is another weakness in our self-offering besides its transient force—its want of singleness of aim. We sometimes give ourselves, but not "unto the LORD." I would not be hard, or ask you to be morbidly afraid of inferior motives. For I believe GOD accepts inferior motives, but only as aids to, not as substitutes for, the higher. If GOD endows you with love of your work, with intense interest in your calling, with a passion for aiding your fellow-creatures, thank Him. These are noble gifts. He that hath them is surely not far from the Kingdom of GOD. Only, they are not of necessity 'consecration unto the LORD.' They are something less: most precious aids and supports, but not to be accepted as all in all. It is a true, deep, *personal act towards God, and a state towards God issuing out of the act*, that we need. It is the spirit of the Psalms, so full of personal devotion towards GOD.

And need I ask you, my brothers, as we kneel in our great Memorial Rite, and strive to realise the Presence, the Love, the Sacrifice; as the



## Consecration to God's Service 19

sacred acts and emblems tell once again the story of Calvary, and plead once again the eternal merits of the One Infinite Offering; as we look up in thankful adoration to our living LORD, and whisper to ourselves, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me,"—need I ask you to make once more, with all your hearts and souls, the consecration of your service—aye, of yourselves—unto the LORD?

When once we can say with utter realisation, 'Thou art my GOD,' and 'My GOD, I am Thine,' then all else is caught up into this sphere of blessedness. All "service," all work, all gifts, all devotion, take their blessedness and glory from the overshadowing of this great life principle. "Who then is willing to consecrate his service this day unto the LORD?"

## IV

# Phases of Holy Communion

*(For Holy Communion)*

No doubt this holy Sacrament has its own special character and tone, regulated by its own special nature and purpose. There must always be something specially solemn in the commemoration of the great Eternal Sacrifice; always something specially moving in the memorial of the crowning act of Love; always something specially sacred in partaking of hallowed pledges and signs of God's highest gifts to the soul; always something specially joyous and exultant in the consciousness of CHRIST's strengthening and comforting Presence.

Also our own Church of England service, fashioned as it is in large measure upon, or perhaps rather developed from, the primitive Liturgies of the Church, has its own tone and character. Indeed, it is made up of varied tones and characters; for, like some rich sonata, its course is marked by studied and thoughtful inter-

change of Minor and Major, Confession, Thanksgiving, Penitence, Praise, each in turn taking its place and claiming its due emotion, yet with one great general purpose and tenor running throughout, as more and more the humiliations of confession and self-oblation emerge in the splendours of triumphal adoration.

Yet *we* are not always the same. *We* have no unvarying tone and character. *We* are always varying. And I suppose that there is almost as much difference in the different tones of mind and phases of feeling in the same person at different times in coming to the Holy Communion as there is in different persons when they come.

But ought we not to try and aim at a frame of mind in harmony with the tone of service?—to come with hearts attuned to its varying utterances?—to fit ourselves to bow down in lowly humiliation at its penitential confessions, and to rise to jubilant exultation in its songs of joy and triumph? Yes, it is well to have a framework and model to which to adapt our devotions. We may be very thankful for the guiding of the Church in the spirit of her services.

But to-day let me rather draw attention to an opposite thought—viz., the many-sidedness, so to speak, of this holy service; how it fits varied moods; how it lends itself to varied needs; how it fulfils varied purposes.

First, as to varied moods. It is a great thing to know and to teach that this is not only a service for saints, but a Sacrament for sinners. The very fact that it has in it the humblest and most touching of confessions proves this. The very preparatory portion, inviting to self-examination and self-accusation, in the recitation of the Ten Commandments, seems to cry to poor trembling sinners in all their conscious unworthiness not to stand aloof and say, 'This is too sacred and solemn a thing for me.' The very prayer of humble access would comfort and cheer the sin-stricken conscience, longing yet fearing, as its inmost thought is uttered in the "We do not presume," "We are not worthy." Surely He who came to save sinners, He whose blood cleanseth from all sin—surely He would never cast out the poor trembling sinner coming to Him for pardon and mercy. It is indeed a Sacrament for sinners who are also penitents. And in connection with this thought we shall not forget how different a tone must be given to the Holy Communion by the different Church Seasons. A Communion in Holy Week will possess a very different character from our Easter Celebration. And few things are more helpful than a careful entering into the tone and spirit of the Church's Seasons.

Then it is no less surely a Sacrament for the

sad and sorrowing. Where shall they betake themselves in their sadness if not to the loving, tender heart of Jesus? Who shall comfort and support them if not He who said, "Come unto Me, all that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you"? If we would realise His sympathy, where shall we do so more surely than at the foot of the Cross, gazing on the stupendous act of Love, recognising how the Prince of sufferers is able to enter into every pang of human suffering?

There will be times when we cannot draw nigh with all the bright, joyous confidence, with all the clear, unclouded faith, all the glad adoring love, which best befit our blessed sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving. Be it so. Then we will draw nigh as sinners, we will draw nigh as mourners; anyhow, we will come; and, as our need is, so shall our blessing be.

But we must not forget that there come to most of us from time to time seasons of great happiness. God in His mercy bestows upon us some great blessing, and the whole heart is full of the gladness of rejoicing and the upspringing of thankful praise. And shall we not bring this, our spring of joy and thanksgiving, and offer it before the altar of God, even the God of our joy and gladness? Is it not a fitting thing that our happy hearts should pour themselves out in

this sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving? Shall we betake ourselves with our troubles and sorrows to the LORD, in this blessed Eucharistic hour, and not come with our joys and mercies? Nay; surely here, if anywhere, may we fitly offer up our tribute of holy gratitude for all God's goodness to us.

But we have varied needs as well as varied moods, and surely it is equally true to say that this Holy Sacrament meets these varied needs. One day we need, it may be, pardon for some sad sin, some cowardice, some neglect of duty, some self-indulgence, some sufferance of unholy thoughts and imaginations, some rebellion of the flesh. Well, where shall we find pardon if not in the precious Blood of the Cross wherewith we therein seek to wash our guilty souls? Another day, may be, we need grace and strength to wage battle more faithfully and courageously against some besetting sin, some clinging habit of self-indulgence, some infirmity of the natural man too long unresisted and unsubdued. Shall we find the strength we need anywhere else save in the power and grace of our crucified Master? Has He not won it for us? Has He not promised it? If pardon flows from the Cross, surely no less does grace flow from the Cross. I know not how we can be strong, unless we be "strong in the LORD, and in the power of His might."

Then, again, a day will come when our whole soul is filled with grave fear and anxious misgivings for one we love. Or a time of distress and anguish will arise for the Church of Christ, when it is sore pressed, and seems to be at the mercy of such as have ill-will at Sion. Or some dear friend is in great perplexity and trouble of soul, and we know not how to bring relief, and yet long to comfort and help. Then whither shall we take our intercessions, save to the foot of the Cross; and when shall we pour out our hearts' desire more earnestly and prevailingly than when we are pleading before GOD the one once-offered, ever-blessed Sacrifice, in the merit of which alone we dare make our requests known unto GOD? Surely this is a time for blending our feeble intercessions with those of our one great Mediator and Intercessor.

Once again, it may be that troubles and trials may come to us by some drifting cloud of doubt, which darkens the heavens, and hides the light of GOD. It makes one tremble. The old foundations seem giving way. The truths we have based all our hopes upon, and on which we have built up all life's superstructures, are questioned and denied, and a voice whispers to us, 'Suppose it be all a dream?' Ah! this is a sore trial. Well, shall we say, 'Better not go through the farce of Prayer and Communion til faith shines out again

bright and unclouded' ? Nay, I would rather say, 'Poor clouded soul, struggle on. Obey and believe, even if you cannot see. Cry to GOD, and cease not. Come, aye come, if you are longing for and seeking for light; come to Him who is the Light of the world, and in His light you shall at last see light.'

Now, in speaking of the varied needs and purposes with which we may come to the Holy Communion, I venture to speak a word of brotherly caution as to an expression very frequently heard in these days. Men speak of celebrating the Holy Communion with such and such an "intention." I do not know whether all who use it have made it clear to themselves what the expression means. Certainly some at least seem to speak as though they held that you might assign a particular celebration of the Holy Communion to a particular object, towards which it would in some way conduce apart from special prayer for such object. Surely this is a very unworthy piece of superstition. I have already said how well it is at such a time to intercede earnestly for any object near one's heart, and one may at any time make such object a very prominent one in one's pleading before the throne. But do let us be careful not to run into the error of assigning the service itself, apart from special prayers accompanying it, as a sort of meritorious



offering towards the end desired. I would deprecate the use of the phrase itself, as it seems to me to be very misleading, although no doubt it *may* be used in a true and legitimate sense.

Finally, as we come to the Holy Communion, at one time full of penitential grief, at another to plead earnestly for some longed-for blessing, at another seeking light and peace, so there are times when it is best to come simply to realise the Presence of JESUS, that Presence which is so intensely real, which one so dreads to define and limit, which one even shrinks from assigning to time or place; just to bow down in lowly adoration, saying, 'My LORD is here'; just to lie in spirit, like St. John, on the breast of Divine Love; just to know Him in the breaking of bread; just to realise His nearness and power. Or it may be sometimes only to open the soul to receive what GOD will; to come with the receptive spirit of a child, knowing that the FATHER will give what is best; to wait and see what the LORD will give; and to thank Him for His simplest gifts.

Yes; this Divine service is many-sided; full of rich and varied blessing; to the faithful, loving soul no formal act of recurring sameness, but, like some lovely landscape, ever changing, ever putting on new beauties of light and colouring with the varying phases of sunshine and shadow,

and so bringing ever new and unexpected blessedness—aye, more, far more, than we can desire or deserve.

May GOD open our hearts to the reception of all His bounties more and more, and teach us to say, “I sat down under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit was sweet to my taste. He brought me to the banqueting house, and His banner over me was LOVE.”

## V

# The Pure in Heart

*(For Holy Communion)*

St. Matt. v. 8 : "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

WE are all preachers of Purity to our people. We should not be faithful if we were not. We dare not pass by a grace so essential to Christian holiness, so enforced in Holy Scripture, so conspicuous in all the saints of GOD. It is not easy. One so dreads lest the warning should in any soul become suggestion, lest in any pure, simple child of GOD any word of ours should tarnish the brightness of innocence, and leave a shade, however slight. I do dread the effect, on the young especially—but I dread it on the nation at large—of increased familiarity with the hateful details of sins of impurity. And we have had terrible contributions to this increased familiarity; not to speak of the demoralising influence of the publication of the filthy details of divorce cases, and the horrible uncleanness of some of the popular novels,

which find their way into all public libraries, and are not infrequently seen on drawing-room tables.

Well, we must speak on Purity—as the Bible speaks—plainly, but very reverently; strongly, but very guardedly. We have our opportunities, or we can make them. Let me urge you, my brothers, when preparing the young for Confirmation, always affectionately, yet very solemnly, to warn them against the subtle and perilous approach of sins of impurity. There are thousands of young men who will say, ‘No one ever spoke a word of warning or counsel to me on these things.’ And yet have they not been confirmed? Many have, no doubt. And then was perhaps the one chance. I am quite sure that there are also thousands who all through life remember gratefully any words of kindly yet outspoken warning given to them by their parish priest at such time. GOD help us all to be more faithful in this thing!

But what if the teachers of Purity are themselves less than that which they teach others to be? O brothers, as here we draw nigh to the All-pure, as we seek a place in that sinless heart, as we plead for the incoming into our own sinful souls of that life—that strong, pure, holy life—which flows from Him Who is *the* Life, suffer the word of exhortation from one who would set himself

among you, and speak to himself no less than to you.

Has our Ordination set us in some charmed circle so that the old temptations cannot get to us? Has the gift that is in us by the laying on of hands so occupied our whole being that the tempter can find no room to insinuate subtle thoughts of evil? Oh, for our own sakes first—for the shepherds of souls have souls themselves to guard and purify—let us be honest. Let us open these souls of ours before GOD. Let us set them in the fierce burning light of His holiness. Be honest. *Be honest.* We must see ourselves as GOD sees us. We must ask ourselves, What does GOD see as He looks upon my soul? If any are called to holiness, surely we are. Propriety of living, respectability of conduct, correctness of speech, suffice not for the priest of GOD. Nothing suffices but inward holiness. If any man should obey the charge, surely you and I most: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of GOD"—"*perfecting holiness,*" it is a strong expression. My brothers, pardon me if I ask such questions as these: Are our thoughts—our most secret thoughts—guarded against the entrance of every unclean imagination? Is there never any scarcely-conscious pleasure in the remembrance of impure things? Is the eye guilt-

less? We know by how many avenues the dark, shadowy forms of evil will find their way to the soul. Are we watching each approach? Is no gateway left unguarded? Oh! how often, in the sad but secret history of some deadly fall has the sin begun in the unguardedness of some little entrance gate, so that just a little thought, a bare passing shadow of impurity, has slipped in and taken up its lodging, ready to unbar the gate for other unholy guests, and so at last betraying the citadel to the enemy?

Aye, but we are teachers. Thou that teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest a man should be pure, art thou pure? How *can* we teach what we are not? Or if we essay it, what dreadful hollow hypocrisy it all is! I know our preaching often condemns us. I know we have need continually to pray that we ourselves may be what we counsel others to be. It is very humbling. But in this matter of Purity it is something more: it is shameful.

Now I do not want to dishearten. I know how sins of impurity cling and beset; how hard they die; how many a saintly soul has shuddered to find how they will mock him even when on his knees. I would not say to a brother, Dare not to preach Purity till you yourself are absolutely pure. But I would say, Dare not to do so till you are honestly and earnestly struggling

after absolute Purity. It is the wilful admission of sin; the allowing the sinful thought to rest with pleasure for even one instant on the soul; the permission from time to time of sinful imaginations, or acts, or looks; it is such things as these which are so inconsistent with the teaching of Purity. O my brothers, I know you would gladly guard the innocent, and rescue the guilty. I know you would gladly help a poor, baffled, frightened brother, half in despair at his own weakness and failure, to fight his battle more bravely and to win victory. Then "keep thyself pure." Indeed, it is the only way.

And how can we do this? Oh! by ever living in the conscious presence of Him Who is as the negative pole of the magnet to all impurity. If you would banish the unholy guest from your soul, it must be by allowing Another to occupy the room. Have JESUS ever near you. It is not *we* who can make ourselves pure. *He* must do it. If only we realised His indwelling presence, how could we admit visitors we know to be hateful to Him? Lo! in this blessed Sacrament we are seeking renewal of that indwelling presence; we are asking once again, as we have a thousand times before, that He would dwell in us, and we in Him, that our union may be drawn closer, more firmly cemented. We want to live the sacramental life. As Holy Baptism obliges us

to a new and risen life, so Holy Communion obliges us to a life of Union.

O JESUS, pure and spotless, yet knowing our infirmities, tempted like as we are, yet without sin, come to us once again. Despise not these poor, unclean, unworthy souls of ours. Come and abide with us. Come and drive out all that offends, and make us wholly Thine. Come and create in us Thine own whiteness of Purity. Come and fill us with Thine own glorious life, that we may live with Thee, for Thee, to Thee, in Thee, now and for ever. Amen.



## VI

# Dying and Living

(*For Holy Communion*)

2 Cor. vi. 9 : "As dying, and behold, we live."

THE Epistle for the first Sunday in Lent is full of Ember thoughts. How it puts us, in these easy, luxurious days, to shame!

After a long enumeration of the evidence by which the Apostle shows himself to be approved as the Minister of CHRIST, he breaks up the latter part into nine pairs, of which the central pair is, "As dying, and behold, we live."

Let us concentrate our thoughts on this.

It is a description of the Minister of CHRIST *as seen in the world*.

It cannot be only of the inward, unseen death unto sin, and new birth unto righteousness, that the Apostle is here speaking; else it were no sign or evidence. It must be something men can take account of.

"Dying." Compare 2 Cor. iv. 11, "We which

live are alway delivered unto death for JESUS' sake"; and Romans viii. 36, "As it is written, For Thy sake we are killed all the day long"; and again, 1 Cor. xv. 31, "I protest by your rejoicing which I have in CHRIST JESUS our SAVIOUR, I die daily." He was "in deaths oft."

He plainly speaks of an outward life of peril and suffering and hardship—a very living death—"always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS."

Where shall we look *now* for this?

Well, thank GOD these are not days of persecution. We have no fear now of the lions or the stake because we confess Christ. And yet we cannot but remember that the French Revolution, in which hundreds were put to cruel death simply because they were Christians and would not renounce their religion, was only a hundred years ago. Who can tell what may be? But I say, 'Thank GOD these are not days of persecution,' because who can say how he could stand the trial? Yet perchance faith was purer, love more glowing, religion more real, in those days of "dying."

But what is this about *losing life* and finding it? *Losing life* sounds very like dying. What is this that is said, "If we be dead with CHRIST, we shall also live with Him"? Yes; when the

life is no more our own, but GOD's; when all of self is lost; when the life is spent for Him; when labour, hardship, weariness, self-denial, disappointment, are all accepted, welcomed, for His sake—then we are in truth “dying.” The life belongs either to self or to GOD. When alive to self, we are dead to GOD; when dead to self, we are alive to GOD.

Now what is *our* life? What elements of death are there in it?—I do not mean such as are imposed from without, but self-imposed. Are we losing our life? Are we giving it away to GOD? We are not afraid now of the cross, or stake, or wild beasts; but is it true “I am crucified with CHRIST”? Have you taken it, that life of yours, and laid it down and offered it simply and unreservedly to CHRIST? Some lives tell their story plainly enough. St. Paul's did. So not seldom does a life in an East London parish—a life which forces all who regard it to say, ‘This man lives for GOD,’—the life of one who so lives that all his people know they can claim his services, that he is the servant of all, his time theirs, his heart theirs, that he cannot take offence, cannot be made into an enemy, that he spends and is spent for CHRIST,—a life the very motto of which is, “No man liveth unto himself”;—such a life tells its own story. This is “dying, and behold, he lives.”

I said that this is not spoken of *inward* dying, else there were no approval to the world. Yet we must never forget that the outwardly dying life draws its secret force and power from the inward. And there are who live and act to be seen of men. In very truth the outward life, except it be sheer hypocrisy, is only the inward translated into fact. It is when the inward life is dead to sin, dead to the world, dead to self, that the outward dying is so potent a manifestation of the Minister of CHRIST. Again and again let us remind ourselves that the man is, in the reality of his being, in the truth of his character, as seen by GOD, that which he is within. It is there the dying has first to be wrought out. The outer life will follow.

"Behold, we live!" There is a joy and triumph in these words. They are not like the other pairs. "As dying and yet living," how tame it sounds beside that which is written! Ah yes! If we thought of one side only, we might well grovel in a slavish formality, or bind ourselves in rigid bonds of joyless asceticism; we might be grinding out the one life, and never kindling the other. "Behold, we live!" Yes; "I am crucified, nevertheless I live!" There is, all through, a strong, vigorous, throbbing, rejoicing life—a life which soars above the dying—"always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD

JESUS, that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in our body."

Brothers, ours is a *living* ministry, full of life, informed by the Spirit of Life, breathing life, infusing life. And life is joy! We do not haunt and hover about the tombs. We are caught up in a present resurrection. "Though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations"; nevertheless, "ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." "Behold, we live!"

And *here*, in this solemn hour, as waiting to draw nigh to the very presence of the living LORD, shall we speak of death or of life? Nay, of death passing into life. For being made partakers of His death, we shall also be partakers of His resurrection. Ah yes! we show forth the LORD's death till He come. But our CHRIST is no dead CHRIST. "I am He that liveth and was dead." We show the death, but partake of the life. Through the sacrifice we pass to the life. He died that we might live.

"Behold, we live!" For CHRIST liveth in us — in sacramental power — in spiritual union — in wrought-out resemblance. "I am the Life."

"Behold, we live!" The one life lost, we have gained another—better, truer, gladder.

"Behold, we live!" Aye, even now, for He

“came that we might have life, and might have it more abundantly.”

“Behold, we live!” For “he that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood *hath* eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.”  
Amen.

## VII

### “ In Christ ”

(*For Holy Communion*)

WHAT a wonderful chapter is the first of the Epistle to the Ephesians! Its key-note is “in CHRIST.” We seem, as we read it, almost “caught up,” as the writer was once, “to the third heaven.” It is all so high, and holy, and heavenly! Aye, but the worst is, it is all so soaring above our common thoughts and common life and common feelings! But see how the Apostle would trace every blessing and privilege to union with CHRIST. This is the secret of all; this is the fountain of all. Once “in CHRIST,” and what is not ours? The whole teaching of the chapter is summed up in the second verse: “Blessed be the GOD and FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in *Christ*” —“*all spiritual blessings.*”

I. “He hath *chosen* us *in Him* before the foundation of the world.” Oh! the mystery and

love of this eternal choice. We cannot explain it. "Who hath known the mind of the LORD?" Yet how deep is the comfort? *God hath chosen me.* But what for? Ah! now there is something plain enough. If I cannot tell why GOD set His choice upon me, I can tell for what He chose me—"that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love." Holiness—the secret state of the heart, seen only by GOD; Blamelessness—the uprightness of living, of which man can take cognisance; and Love—ah! highly-honoured grace, spring of all that is noble and beautiful, true motive of a holy life! Love, the fulfilling of the law! Love, the great tree with its two branches, Love to GOD and Love to man;—it was for this that GOD chose me.

2. "Having *predestinated* us unto the adoption of children by JESUS CHRIST to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will." Whether this implies a separate act from the *choice* we know not. Probably it does not. Yet the very word "predestinated" points more distinctly to some definite end and purpose in the counsels of GOD. What is this? I suppose a common thought, at least some little time ago, would be, *unto eternal life*. Well, we need not vex ourselves with old controversies. It is quite true. GOD means us to be saved. But this predestination is to a call and a privilege: it is to "the adoption of sons."



How wonderful that GOD should set His love on me! Yet it is "by JESUS CHRIST." All is in Him and through Him.

3. Again, "He hath made us *accepted* in the Beloved." How else could we be accepted? What have we? What can we offer? Nay, we set CHRIST and His righteousness between our guilty souls and GOD's great holiness. Except as standing in CHRIST—in blessed union with Him—we dare not draw nigh. In Him we have "access with boldness."

4. "In Whom we have *redemption* through His Blood, the *forgiveness of sins*." We must not lose ourselves in some vague, misty idea of a union apart from the sacrifice and death of CHRIST. The redemption, the forgiveness, are ours in CHRIST, but "through His Blood." It takes us straight to the Cross, sets us in front of the tremendous Sacrifice, which we are about to commemorate and plead. Ah! precious truth for each sin-stained guilty soul: He "loved me, and gave Himself for me."

5. But there must be no selfish acceptance of salvation, no satisfying of self with the idea of winning a prize and securing eternity of joy. Nay, for GOD's purposes are wider still. GOD would "gather together in one all things in CHRIST." Yes, we may not forget the corporate aspect of our religion. There is a Church, a

Kingdom, a bond binding all together in holy oneness, and all *in Christ*. Oh, to realise our holy union, to have the same care one of another! "For ye are one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another."

6. But further still. GOD has endowed us with a rich possession. For in CHRIST also "we have obtained an inheritance," or "were made an heritage," entering into the Kingdom, having the foretaste of our everlasting portion, already sharing in those things which, as the Apostle says, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither had entered into the heart of man, but which GOD hath revealed" unto us. Yes, the Christian does not fight only that some day he may win his portion: he fights to keep what GOD has given; he fights lest he lose his inheritance.

7. Aye, for, once more, in Christ "ye were sealed with that HOLY SPIRIT of promise." GOD hath given the earnest of the SPIRIT in our hearts. It is "the earnest of our inheritance." It is that Divine guide, teaching, comforting, sanctifying, which is GOD's best gift of all. For that is GOD Himself dwelling in us. And if He be in us, what more can we need?

See then how true it is that we are "blessed with all spiritual blessings in CHRIST." Verily, it is true. GOD "hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS."

And now how to be “*in Christ*”—that is the great question for us all. Certainly our union is spoken of as effected by faith, which is a gift of GOD—the faith that realises, lays hold of, embraces CHRIST.

But JESUS, knowing our weakness and earthliness, has in pity given us wonderful aids to Faith. And certainly this Holy Sacrament is one instrument and efficacious sign of the holy and blessed union we are meditating upon.

For in this, worthily received, as our Church rightly teaches us, “we dwell in CHRIST, and He in us; we are one with CHRIST, and He with us.”

My brothers, let us even now pray that we may realise our oneness with Him. Let us pray for faith to enter within the veil, and see our great High Priest offering for us the one great Eternal Sacrifice—pleading for us that we may be one, even as He and the FATHER are one. Let us pray that even in this holy and blessed feast we may so draw nigh, and so eat and drink in faith, that we may be indeed “in CHRIST,” surrounded by Him, filled with Him, and so united to Him in sacramental union that we may live and rest in Him for ever!

## VIII

# "Touch Me Not"

*(For Holy Communion)*

St. John xx. 17: "Touch Me not."

How strange that the touch permitted to others—to the holy women who followed her from the sepulchre, to the assembled Ten that evening, to St. Thomas a week after—was denied to the Magdalene! Was her action too eager and unrestrained? Was there any lack of reverence through warmth of love? Were her thoughts of her LORD too earthly? Perhaps. It would seem at least that the words contain some gentle reproof. Yet surely not wrongly do ancient writers—Augustine, Cyril, Leo,—see in the words a deeper thought. The LORD would not have her content with any mark or token of affection for His visible Body. He would bid her look for a higher, more blessed touch; as though He said, 'Touch Me not now with bodily touch, as if that would bring you your great blessing; but touch Me hereafter, when I am ascended up, by

the touch of faith, and through such approaches as I shall appoint you.”

Yes, assuredly in the reason given—“*for* I am not yet ascended to My FATHER”—there is the pledge and prophecy of some truer, closer, more blessed touch.

Keble in his *Lyra Innocentium* thus expands the meaning :

“ Love with infant haste would fain  
 Touch Him and adore ;  
 But a deeper holier gain  
 Mercy keeps in store :  
 ‘ Touch Me not ; awhile believe Me ;  
 Touch Me not till Heaven receive Me ;  
 Then draw near and never leave Me ;  
 Then I go no more.’ ”

So to *us* there is a truer, better, more blessed touch than could have been any bodily touch of the Magdalene, or St. Thomas, or St. John, because ours is a spiritual touch, a soul-touch.

If JESUS could say it was expedient He should go away, because if He went not away the Comforter would not come, may we not believe also that it was expedient He should go away, because not otherwise would His disciples learn the spirituality of His kingdom, of His presence, of His ordinances ?

Perhaps we may find a parallel to the saying upon which we are now meditating in the words

of our LORD spoken at the conclusion of the great discourse upon the Bread of Life in St. John vi. When the disciples murmured at the hardness of His sayings as to eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood, He said, "Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" I think He means, 'My words would be still more startling then.' Yes; but they would gain a new depth of meaning then. The disciples would see then how wholly spiritual must be their understanding of them. When I am ascended to My FATHER, ye shall touch Me by faith, ye shall feed on Me by faith.'

Those disciples were very earthly, very carnal, in their conceptions. They had to learn, no less than the poor ignorant Samaritans, that "GOD is Spirit," and that "they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." They had to be taught that there is a kingdom more glorious than any earthly kingdom, a presence closer and more blessed than any visible presence of their LORD, a touch truer and fuller of power than any material touch.

This spiritual touch—what is it? Can we define or describe it? It is very hard to realise anything purely spiritual. While in the flesh we are so linked and tied to what is outward that it needs a strong effort of thought to dis-

entangle what is spiritual from all relation to and connection with outward things and material conditions. At best we can only speak in figures borrowed from the material. We have no language of the purely spiritual. Perhaps we may describe this spiritual touch as a conscious approach of spirit to spirit. Of course the very word ‘approach’ is a most faulty and inadequate word. GOD is everywhere: we cannot really get nearer. Yet it is Bible language: “Draw nigh unto GOD, and He will draw nigh unto you.” And this, I think, we can understand. The human spirit can grasp and act upon the sense of nearness; can, as it were, go forth to GOD, Who is Spirit, in the exercise or utterance of certain energies and emotions which have their object in Him. Love, Faith, Trust, are such energies. They bring out the sense of nearness, and join the soul to GOD as by a hand which touches. So with all worship, which is the *utterance* of energies and emotions which have their object in GOD. Every act of worship is a stretching forth of the hand to touch GOD. Surely this truth underlies the whole conception of worship. What are Confession, Praise, Intercession, Petition, Thanksgiving, but the soul putting out the hand to touch GOD? Yes, and most of all in the blessed Communion of the SAVIOUR’S Body and Blood. Oh! to learn the

intense and awful spirituality of that act which is, by CHRIST's own ordering, most bound up with outward form and circumstance! "It is the Spirit that quickeneth." Oh! that under the seemly order, the reverent ritual, the gracious and hallowed language of this sacred rite, the soul might ever put forth a hand and touch JESUS! He is now ascended to His FATHER; yet in the power of His omnipresent Godhead He is here, with us, now. Most real, most blessed is His presence in this Holy Sacrament. I am not curious as to the when, and the where, and the how. I believe He is here to pardon, to bless, to welcome, to feed, to strengthen, the souls that come to Him. What we want is to touch CHRIST. Unless the soul has personal contact with the SAVIOUR, all must be hollow and unreal. It is that touch which brings the life of GOD into the soul of man.

What if the touch be very cold and feeble and unworthy? Well, we have read of the poor woman in the crowd. She did not meet the LORD face to face, and grasp His hand, and cry, 'I will not let Thee go unless Thou bless me.' Her touch was a timid, faltering, frightened touch, as she stole up through the crowd, unmarked, unsuspected, save by Him. Yet it drew the "virtue" forth, and He knew, and He blessed it. Ah, LORD JESUS, and we too, Thy poor



unworthy servants, would touch Thee even now, though it be but the hem of Thy garment. Oh ! help us to put forth the hand of faith and love, that we may win some blessing ! Only a little timid touch, LORD. But Thou wilt know. And, as we pass away from the sacred presence, and mingle once more in the crowd, mayest Thou say of each one of Thy poor, cold-hearted, dim-sighted, unworthy servants, “Somebody hath touched Me.” Amen.

## IX

# The People's Place in the Pastor's Heart

(*For Holy Communion*)

■ Thess. iii. 8: "For now we live, if ye stand fast in the LORD."

THERE is nothing in all the Apostle's letters more striking than the intensity of affection he felt for his converts. It meets us everywhere. It would be startling if it were not so familiar. I suppose *we* are glad if our people are steadfast in the LORD. It was *life* to him. He felt as if he must die if they fell away. He had been full of fears. The Thessalonians had had their trials. The tide had turned against him, and he had fled. They had been exposed to persecution, and had heard, too, how he was hunted from city to city. He might well tremble for their firmness. At last he could not bear it any longer. So he sent Timothy "to establish them, and comfort them concerning their faith." And now Timothy had come back,

bringing good news. "Therefore, brethren, we were comforted over you, in all our afflictions and distress, by your faith. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the LORD." The news of their steadfastness poured new life into him, so completely were they bound up with his heart and life.

It was always so. How he thanked GOD for the Romans, making mention of them without ceasing in his prayers, longing to see them, that he might be comforted together with them by their mutual faith!

How he thanked GOD and prayed for the Corinthians, taking his own afflictions and consolations in trust for them, writing to them with many tears!

For the Galatians he "travailed in birth again till CHRIST was formed in" them.

For the Ephesians he ceased not to give thanks and pray.

For the Philippians he thanked GOD, and in every prayer for them made request with joy.

For the Colossians he gives thanks, and ceases not to pray.

To the Thessalonians he writes the most touching passage which I have already spoken of. They were his "glory and joy." And again, in the second epistle he writes that he was "bound to thank GOD always" for them. He gloried in them for their patience and faith.

You can find much more to the same purport. His whole heart was full of his spiritual children. He prayed for them; thanked God for them; wept for them; longed for them; would very gladly spend and be spent for them; had them in his heart; would gladly die for them.

What a pattern for us! Most of these the Apostle had known but a very short time. He had just visited a town, as one of us might in a mission, and then left. Yet those who had listened, and believed, and been baptized, were graven on his heart. He could not forget them. Nay, they were a part of himself. Their well-being was his very life.

And we have known our people for years. We have watched the child grow up to manhood, have stood by the bed of sickness, have gone to the house of mourning, and yet how little have we loved, and prayed, and thanked God, and longed, and hoped, and watched, and pleaded for our people! Ours seems poor, cold, heartless work by the side of his. Oh! what we want is more of love and sympathy! We want to rejoice with them that do rejoice, and to weep with them that weep. Does it not make us ashamed to read of all this warmth of love and to find our hearts so cold?

Well, perhaps we cannot stir up in ourselves the same eager, passionate longings and regrets.

We are not gifted with such great burning hearts as St. Paul. No ; but we can pray, and we can intercede. Surely one of our great priestly acts is to bear our people before GOD.

Every parish priest should surely have a list of parishioners for special intercession ; his sick chiefly, but many others with whom he has had holy intercourse—those troubled in mind, those striving after a holier life, those fallen away, those beset with temptations. He is not giving his people what they have a right to ask if he withholds from them his prayers.

And do not be content with prayers. Remember how St. Paul *thanks* GOD. It will brighten your view of your parish and your work to look out for, and bear in mind, cases for thanksgiving.

Oh ! to bear our people in our hearts, as CHRIST bears us before the FATHER !

Now let us be practical. We are about to kneel before GOD in holiest and most blessed closeness of access in CHRIST. Could any time be better ? If we crown our every prayer with "through JESUS CHRIST our LORD," surely here our whole service is one great cry "through JESUS CHRIST our LORD." As we commemorate His dying Love and Sacrifice, surely we may, with great boldness, lay before His footstool our intercessions and our thanksgivings, offering them

all in the power and efficacy of the One Eternal Offering. Yes, let each of us even now choose one to pray for, and one to thank GOD for, as he draws nigh in faith.

And let each of us pray GOD that our people may be more in our hearts, to live for or to die for, and that, even if at times we are filled with fear and disheartenment, we may still *live* when we know of those of our flock who "stand fast in the LORD."

## X

# The Spiritual Life

### *Its Nature*

THE spiritual life is as inscrutable as is the natural life. It is the life of GOD within the soul of man. It is the very indwelling presence of the Holy Trinity—the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY SPIRIT. Almost all we can say, if we speak of the nature of the spiritual life in the sense of its essence, is that it is a Divine presence, a living power, not of nature but of grace, not of man but of GOD.

Like the natural life, it can only be known by its energies. It is quite true that the natural life may be in the frame, and yet none may be able to see it. It sometimes is so in a state of coma. Friends standing around may think that the life has flown when it is still there, and a sigh, an opening of the eyes, may reveal that it still exists. So is it with the soul. We dare not say, even of one showing no energies of life, that the life is not there. Yet for all practical

purposes the presence of life is known only by its energies.

So in dealing with the nature of the spiritual life we must speak of the nature of its actings. Life is almost unintelligible without motion. What we have to do is to watch the character of its actings, that we may know whether we have any right to deem it really present or no.

Our subject, then, is *the spiritual life in action*. We ask, What are its leading features or characteristics?

1. The beginning, the middle, the end, of all spiritual life is *surrender of self to God*. 'My GOD, I am Thine,' is the cry of the soul instinct with Divine life. How could it be otherwise? If the spiritual life be God's presence, then the first effect of that life must be the consciousness of that presence, and the simple acceptance of that presence as the life. A life of devotion really means, not a life of multitudinous religious exercises, but the life of a soul *devoted*, vowed utterly to GOD.

This self-surrender has its degrees. Like all graces, it has its growth. It is the essence of the baptismal grace and calling. "We are buried with CHRIST by baptism into death"—"buried with Him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with Him"—called, pledged, dedicated admitted into life, which is no longer our own, but CHRIST'S.



“Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price.” “No man liveth unto himself.” Oh! that we dare say this in very truth! For alas! we do live—how large a part of our lives—unto self; yet all belongs to GOD. We profess to give up all to Him, to lay upon His altar the full cost of our self-surrender; but oh! how we all keep back part of the price! Yet, however feebly it be carried out, *in principle* this self-surrender is the yielding up of the *will* to GOD. It is the saying “Thy will be done.” It is the merging of self in GOD. All else will really follow from this. Once let self be nothing, and GOD all, and we have gained the secret of a holy and happy life. It is simply the kicking of our fleshly nature against this absolute surrender which is the source of all *unholiness* and *unhappiness*. St. Augustine speaks thus, “Thou hast made me for Thyself, and my heart knoweth no rest until it attain to Thee.”

2. The spiritual life is not only “hid in GOD,” but it is “hid *with Christ* in GOD.” It is a life drawing its force, its character, its direction, from its union with and conformity to the Life of CHRIST. “I am crucified with CHRIST: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of GOD, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” Thus the true

spiritual life is *the Life of Christ wrought out in us—Christ living in us*—self surrendered to GOD in CHRIST-like energies.

When we place our whole being at GOD's footstool, and consecrate it to Him, there is a peril of this self-dedication evaporating in vague feeling. Professions, vows of dedication, the excitement of emotional outbursts, blessed aspirations, these are not religion, these are not the spiritual life. GOD gives to us warmth of feeling, stirrings of newly-kindled faith and love and hope, even the impetus of excitement, as a help. But let no one say, 'This is spiritual life.' Pious emotions are empty delusions unless they guide the outflow of the soul into practical channels. Let a man say, 'I have given myself to GOD,' and the next question will be, 'How shall I please GOD?' And the answer will be, 'By a life of faith in His dear SON—a life lived in constant reference to CHRIST, with a constant remembrance of His life, His words, His actions, His character.' "Let this mind be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS." We can only run our race aright "looking unto JESUS." How much does this imply! Oh, what purity! what utter heroic unselfishness! what self-sacrifice! what high communings with GOD! what loving ministrations to man! what wonderful patience, and gentleness, and forgiveness,

and sympathy! We may well be staggered at the height of the point to which we are bidden to climb. It is high—fearfully high—as high as heaven. But a low aim never struck a high mark. The pattern of JESUS!—that is our aim. We shall never reach it. We all know that well. But aim at the highest point, and by GOD's grace you may reach part of the way.

3. The true spiritual life is a *Spirit-led* life. It is a life of sanctification by the HOLY SPIRIT of GOD. There must be a conscious yielding to the promptings and leadings of the HOLY GHOST. And this not to His external leadings only, as in Holy Scripture; but there must be also a recognising of each holy impulse, each movement of the soul Godward, each utterance of a tender and enlightened conscience, as the voice of the HOLY SPIRIT. The promptings of holy thoughts, the fannings of the embers of love, the drawings of the Cross, the yearnings to the heart of JESUS, the impulses of fuller, truer, heartier self-surrender, the leanings of childlike confidence on GOD, the breathings of happy peacefulness, at such times as this, are very blessed. They prove that GOD is with us. They come not of our own weak sinful hearts; GOD sends them. It will be a great help to humility to recognise all good as from without self, all strength as from above self, and to know that, while in ourselves, *i.e.* in

our flesh, "dwelleth no good thing," yet "the righteousness of the law" may be fulfilled in those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."

4. There are so many features of the spiritual life to describe that it is hard to choose. Perhaps the next characteristic mark is *self-denial*—not austerity, but self-denial. Indeed, surrender to GOD implies the putting away of self. GOD and self are the two antagonistic claimants of our being. If we would be GOD's, we must emancipate ourselves from self, *i.e.* from love of self, self-seeking, self-satisfaction, self-will, self-pleasing. This is the great battle of life, the one unending struggle of GOD's children, *to escape from self into God*. This, in truth, is the putting off of the old man, and the putting on of the new. Nature bids us live in self. Grace bids us live in CHRIST. Self-denial enters into every sphere of life. In all it is precious, as a help to realising that "no man liveth unto himself." Fasting is good, as a denial of self in regard to food and drink, and pleasures and ease, and various minor indulgences. But it must be simple, unobtrusive, done as a help to devotion and self-government, and untinged by the faintest shade of sanctimoniousness or self-righteousness.

But fasting is only one form and part (perhaps in a sense the rudest and most elementary form

and part) of self-denial. What should mark the spiritual life as true is that glorious CHRIST-like self-abnegation which shows itself rather in bright, unconscious, intuitive forgetfulness of self, in the service of others and fulfilment of GOD's will, than in acts of self-imposed severity. We know how lovely the character is of one of whom men say, 'He never thinks of himself.' Surely it is because it is so like the character of CHRIST. *HE never thought of Himself.* Thus self-denial, in its higher forms, runs up into unselfishness. As it becomes refined and purified and spiritualised, it almost ceases to be *denial* at all. Self is bound captive and has ceased to resist. The man lives, in that "use" which in spiritual things, as in others, is "second nature," *to God and to his fellow-men.*

5. We will only take two more characteristics of the spiritual life. It is *very simple*. It is not an elaborate system, but a Divine life; not a complex network of rules and ordinances, but a pure atmosphere; not a Book of Leviticus, but a Gospel of St. John. It is very easy to overburden oneself with manifold devices for helping the spiritual life, and then, by thinking more of these than of the life—more of the means than of the end—to become restless, dissatisfied, self-vexing, too much given to introspection, entangled in scruples, formal, slavish. Simplicity of the

spiritual life seems necessary to the realisation of the freedom of CHRIST. We are "not under the law, but under grace." We are sharers in the "glorious liberty of the children of GOD." Men experienced in the ways of holiness tell us that, as the Christian advances, fewer rules are needed, so that in the aged Christian the spiritual life is very childlike and unconstrained. Happy he who in old age becomes in spiritual things more and more like a little child. Oh! that we all could gain more of this simple, childlike spirit! To be content to be in GOD's hands and to be led just where He wills; to have few cares, save to do simply what He wills, and to live very close to Him—this were indeed well.

6. Lastly, the true spiritual life should be *very happy*. It has been well said that he commits treason against religion who makes it melancholy. There is "joy and peace in believing." This is what St. Paul says should be the fruit of holiness. Surely the highest type of a Christian is one who is very bright, calm, happy. This is the natural fruit of an abiding sense of GOD's presence, and of the security of a soul given to Him. I am well aware that all are not alike in this matter. Some are naturally less bright and cheerful; some are even melancholy and desponding by disposition. Let none judge others. Cheerfulness may be of nature, not of grace. Despondency may be

as a cloud which grace can barely pierce through now and then. We cannot see. GOD can. But if not joy, at least peace should be looked for. Where there is none, we may suspect something wrong. Perhaps by self-scrutiny we may find some little secret fault or defect which sets all wrong and hinders peace. A very small grain of dust will disturb all regularity in the delicate mechanism of a time-piece. A little sin, a little defect, may mar the harmony and disturb the balance of the whole inner man. Still, it may be that such a hindrance is discovered and removed, and yet there is not much peace, and no joy. Or, at best, there are but transient flashes of faint light which we scarcely know whether we have seen or no. Well, the great thing is to take care to remove the *cause* of want of happiness, and then we may leave happiness itself in GOD's hands. Let Him give it or deny it; if the heart is only open to receive what He will, it is well. Heaviness may be the lot of some, and may even endure for the night of this dim life, but "joy cometh in the morning."

Nevertheless, a happy tone of mind may be gained by degrees. We may all use ourselves to more of praise in our lives. Why should we not use ejaculatory praise as well as ejaculatory prayer? Why should we not wake up daily with a "Praise the LORD," or a "Gloria Patri"?

Why should we not win and cherish a habit of many times in the day lifting up heart-praise to the Giver of all blessings? It will help to make us happy if we thus consecrate every enjoyment, and whether it be the beauty of a fair landscape, bright sun-lights in winter trees, the pageantry of cloud scenery at sunrise or sunset, the glory of star-lit heavens, or the pleasure of seeing some dear friend, or happy home delights, or unlooked-for success in some little pastoral work, or unwonted enjoyment of a Church service, or even the simple lightness of heart that comes with physical health and strength—in each one to look up with a child's loving thankfulness and praise our FATHER's goodness.



## XI

# The Spiritual Life

### *Its Hindrances*

I. THE beginning, the middle, and the end of the spiritual life is *surrender of self to God*. So the first hindrance is *indecision*. Behold one of fair promise, seeing the beauty of religion, making efforts, devising schemes, setting himself rules, and yet with his spiritual life dwarfed, stunted, feeble, fruitless. At least, it is hard to discern the three first-named fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace. He is restless, dissatisfied, unequal in spirits, sighing always over half-attainments, irresolute, fickle in action, querulous, making a burden of duties, easily persuaded to postpone or abandon duties. Why all this, and much more so disappointing and unsatisfactory? Ah! the reason is sometimes too plain. He has *kept back part of the price*. Only half his heart (is it always half?) is given to GOD. He is always trying to work out that insoluble problem of serving two masters. He gives his hands to

GOD, and not his heart at all, perhaps: or he gives his intellect, and not his affections: or perhaps it is the opposite—he gives his feelings, but not his actions; the sentiment of religion, not the reality of self-conquest. Or he brings to GOD the accessories of the religious life, scrupulous care in the services of the Church, all nicety of attention to the lesser externals of worship, but not the devotion of his whole being. Or he offers many shreds and patches of life, but not life's texture. Or he offers all—*except* one little cherished possession, which he still clutches as his own. That, which is not given to *God*, is given to *self*. This half-heartedness is what stunts the spiritual life. It will never grow and deepen until there is more thorough devotion, until *all*—spirit, soul, and body, the will and affections, time and talents, little things and great, the whole life and the whole man—belong, and consciously belong, to GOD.

2. The second hindrance to the spiritual life which we will think about is *sloth*; not the sloth of mere indolent inaction—though, if speaking of our work for others rather than for ourselves, this sin would have to be somewhat roughly dealt with—but a deeper, more secret, more subtle, perhaps therefore more deadly, form of sin—*spiritual sloth*. It may be defined as averseness to spiritual exertion. Indeed, sloth, even in its

grosser and more carnal form, is compatible with a life of great activity, for activity in some does not imply exertion. It is natural, easy, pleasant; it would be no self-indulgence to be idle. You know one a very model of pastoral energy, with his daily Prayers, weekly Communions, constant teachings in his school, unremitting care of the sick, diligent visiting of his people. If any one told you that that man is a victim to sloth, you would smile incredulously. Yet we will go with him into his secret chamber; aye, farther—into the secret chamber of his heart. What do we behold? It is the time for his devotions. Surely the same life and energy and zeal which inspired the work of the day will inspire the prayers of the night. But alas! there is a listless, hasty prayer, with no fervour and little intention—perhaps a rapid question or two of self-examination asked with no seriousness, skimming the mere surface of the soul. Aye, and more: the sloth which hinders and spoils and enervates the prayer is not confined to spiritual acts. The very body yields to it. A lazy attitude, a posture more provocative of sleep than of devotion, is but too sure a sign of the spiritual lassitude within. And all this just because sloth is the enemy to all unwelcome exertion, and while active labour is welcome, fervent devotion is unwelcome; and therefore the one is done, the

other left undone. And the inconsistency is no such wonder after all. It is the same with other unwelcome duties. Sloth is the real enemy to all self-denial, all fasting, all curbing of natural inclinations. Sins of indulgence are the fruit of sloth, for there is no energy to resist. It is the absence of the force of resistance, rather than the strength of the force of temptation, which is the frequent cause of the fall. It is easier to yield than to resist, and sloth loves what is easy. The spiritual life grows by energy. Sloth destroys energy. So sloth is a most fatal hindrance to the growth of the spiritual life.

3. *Scantiness of devotion.* This, as has been shown, is often the direct fruit of sloth, but it may be considered separately. Prayer (in the wider sense of all acts of devotion) is *the* great spiritual act of our lives. It is spirit communing with Spirit. It is entering behind the veil and being face to face with God. It is the voice of the spiritual life, "the spirit's vital breath," the very life of the life. Spiritual life can no more grow without devotion than the bodily life without breathing. But how much time do we give to devotion? One who had no sins to confess, no weaknesses to deplore, no perplexities to lay before God for solution, spent whole nights in prayers. We cannot. I have known one woman who for many years spent two hours

in the morning and three at night daily in devotion. Mr. Congreve, at the Plymouth Church Congress, told of a Wesleyan whose life grew into wonderful sanctity, and who was able to spend six hours a day, and sometimes a whole night, in devotion. Which of us *could* do that even for once? But is it not sadly often true, when the spiritual life is not thriving, that one cause is to be sought here? There is little prayer. Of course, there are *forms* of prayer, but of real, earnest supplication how scant a measure! Oh! we sigh over our deadness and coldness and lack of life in religion, when all the time it is easy enough to point to the cause. A short, hurried prayer in the morning—a longer perhaps, but dull and weary, or even sleepy, prayer at night—is not this cause enough? Such may not be the actual habit, but how often sloth steps in and drags the soul down to this meagre measure. Prayer is a poor thing unless there is at least *time* enough to realise calmly God's presence and to wait upon Him. Public prayer is very blessed; but public prayer can never make amends for scantiness of private prayer. Oh! how humbling it is to find we can read a light book for hours without weariness—talk with an earthly friend for hours without weariness—yet half-an-hour with God! oh! how long it seems! Can we really love One we care so little to be with?

4. *Distraction of mind.* This hindrance to the spiritual life comes from the filling of the mind with many things, so that there is a constant coming and going of new guests, and no room for JESUS in the inn. It is a special hindrance to certain temperaments. If we should scarcely suspect an active, energetic worker to be a prey to sloth, there is plainly no difficulty in believing him to be a prey to distraction. He may never wilfully—scarcely ever knowingly—suffer really evil thoughts to visit his mind; yet his very plans and schemes of usefulness, his parish cares or troubles, preparation of sermons and lectures, together with a thousand other matters of all sorts, important and unimportant, come trooping through his mind's passages, and especially whenever he would have a few quiet minutes with GOD. Restlessness of mind haunts his prayers. 'Oh! these wandering thoughts! these wandering thoughts!' he cries. He wants calm, quietude, the power of concentration. Meditation is all but impossible. He tries sometimes, but in a few moments, alas! where are all his thoughts gone to? Some trifling association has turned them into a new track, and they have gone headlong away, anywhere. 'It is no use trying,' he says. Nay, not so. This evil *can* be lessened, if not quite overcome. We can practise concentrating our mind. We can give more time

to effort after devotional habits, and time is an important element. We can pray constantly—aye, wrestle in prayer with GOD—for grace to pray. It is worth struggling for. The herbs of the field grow in calm sunshine and silent showers, not in the rushing storm of boisterous wind. The spiritual life in like manner grows in moments of calm and peaceful waiting upon GOD. “In quietness” is its strength. “Commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and *be still.*” “*Be still, and know that I am God.*”

5. *Love of the world.* This has varied senses—some more open and obvious, some subtle and unsuspected. I speak of it now in its simplest sense—love of the world’s pleasures, attractions, innocent delights. ‘Society,’ if *loved* and *much sought*, is very distracting, very chilling to the spiritual life. There are many degrees between the hermit and the man who is very fond of society. In this matter moderation should be our aim (if there should be an aim at all), and conscience should be our regulating guide. The earnest pastor will not have much time for social amusements. The holy liver will fear their distracting influence. Thank GOD, there is a different tone in these matters in this generation. Yet must we be watchful. It is easy to slide by degrees into snares which catch us unawares, and hinder, when

we scarcely know it, the growth of the spiritual life. Some become necessary to all social gatherings in the neighbourhood, and are much in request. It is hard to withstand, unless, being forearmed, we have made it impossible to be very often out. We can devise engagements—good in themselves, good as preventives of others. It is common now to make Lent a time of abstinence from all pleasure engagements. I would plead that at least Friday, the weekly commemoration of our Saviour's Death, be also thus observed, as one way of marking it as an appointed fast-day of the Church. Then, some are caught in the snare of ecclesiastical dissipation, or at least the love of excitement, company, distraction. There cannot be a church opening, school feast, parish concert, or choir meeting, within miles, but such an one must be there. Does it seem harsh to note such things? But indeed there is a hidden peril, and it is at least well that each should ask, 'Is all this going about good for my soul?' Possibly another question should sometimes be asked, 'Is all this going about faithful to my parish?' Do not think that there is no love of the world where there is none of this outward semblance of it. Here, we will say, is an exemplary parish priest, sparing in pleasures, prodigal of labours, setting his flock a long way above society. Ah! but the devil's



baits (as Jeremy Taylor says) are not the same for all: "he hath apples for children, and gold for men." Dost thou perchance love popularity? Are a fair name and the praise of men very dear to thee? Or has the love of money a place in the most secret corner of thy heart?

6. *Uncharitableness.* There is a temptation to men engaged in a religious calling to be hard, unsympathising with the undeserving, contemptuous in tone when speaking of others from whom they differ, *e.g.* dissenters, or those of an opposite Church party. This harshness of spirit is a hindrance to the growth of the spiritual life, because it is in direct antagonism to the Spirit of CHRIST. Oh! how gentle (save only to the spirit of pride and self-righteousness, which is akin to uncharitableness), how gentle was JESUS! How sympathising with the worthless! How patient with opponents! It is perfectly wonderful how He bore with the ignorance, mistakes, hardness, unspirituality, of His chosen disciples. It is full of instruction how He filled His time (oh! what priceless moments!) with tender care for the bodies of men. It is marvellously suggestive how carefully, how graciously, He led on step by step the faltering faith of the timid Nicodemus; how wisely, yet how mercifully, He dealt with the unhappy woman at Jacob's well. "Let this mind be in you which was also in CHRIST

JESUS." Growth in the spiritual life must be growth in likeness to Him.

7. "*A root of bitterness*"—some little fragment of fleshly lust lying buried in the soil of the heart. Any little bit of some roots will grow and spread. This is one of that sort. We may cut down the upgrowth from the root whenever it appears; and so the bitterness of the plant may not be seen; but if the root is there, any day a sudden shoot may spring up, and startle us by its luxuriance. Well is it if even then we taste the bitterness in remorse, and set to work by GOD's grace to root out the last vestige from the heart. But it clings hard to the soil. It is no easy task to eradicate it. Then, too, it sends up shoots so different from one another, that they are sometimes hard to detect. And Satan would gladly perplex us. It is difficult to deal with this subject, yet to be of any use one must be plain. Am I wrong in saying that there may be a dim memory of impure things—perhaps things heard when a boy at school—perhaps things learnt more guiltily after boyhood? Can it be that there is in some a memory which brings not with it the shame, the horror, the hatred, which should be—a memory which, being sometimes allowed in an unguarded moment to rest upon the soul, or to divert the imagination into paths full of peril,

itself renews the guilt of that which is remembered?—Or is there what looks like innocent affectionateness of manner, some secret fibre of which, if traced patiently back through the soil, might be found fast to that root I have named?—Or perhaps a love of art, which, being thought to be that only, may hold within itself a love of some of the subjects which art should, but does not always, rescue from evil associations?—Or, again, can some have a pleasure in news, which, seeming but innocent curiosity, is nevertheless stimulated by any delicately-veiled suggestions of thoughts which in grosser forms would be at once repelled? I know not whether my words may not seem to some worthy only of indignant protest. I hope so. But this I know—that the spiritual life will not grow side by side with this root of bitterness. The custody of the heart is the first thing. Then the *custody of the eyes*. “Turn away mine eyes lest they behold vanity; and quicken Thou me in Thy way.” “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”—to which text Bishop Wilson appends these words: Εἴ δὲ Παῦλος, τὶ ἂν εἴποιμεν ἡμεῖς;

## XII

# The Spiritual Life

### *Its Growth*

I. THERE can be no spiritual life without growth. It must be so, for the spiritual life has a goal given it for its aim, a model for its imitation, and its true energies must be bent on nearing the goal and working towards the model. What is the goal and model? *Perfection*. Nothing short. "Be ye perfect, even as your FATHER which is in heaven is perfect." And if this τελειότης in the Sermon on the Mount implies rather the completeness of all-embracing love than what is ordinarily meant by perfection, yet is not One again and again set before us as our model, Who, though sharer of our nature, was absolutely perfect in each separate grace, as well as in the faultless harmony of all? The toiler on the path of holiness sees ever a hand pointing to a faint snowy peak scarce visible in the topmost sky, far above and far beyond the nearer ranges and summits over which his path-

way lies. Shall he ever reach it? Not here. Perhaps he may scarcely reach the nearest of the many ranges which lie between. Yet, if he fix his eyes on the goal, and if he be found struggling but a little way upward—nay, though he be almost at the very foot of the ascent—he *shall* reach that pure heavenly summit. *But not here.* Oh! how near the bottom of the mountain we are! On what an awful unapproachable height does our spotless model seem to stand? What! Aim there? Start on the ascent, with that stupendous point the object of our ambition? We stand dazzled and hopeless. No, not hopeless; for in mercy GOD shows us some little point just above us, and bids us reach that first. Step by step He leads us on. And if we can see one step before, it is enough. We will take that step, and if it be only planted on the very foot of the mighty mountain, we will thank God Who has begun the good work in us, and say with joy, like the aged saint as he was carried to the lions at Rome, *Νὺν ἄρχομαι μαθητὴς εἶναι.*

2 But have we not started too hastily? Yes; as we set foot on the mountain of holiness we leave something behind. Look back a moment. See what lies there just at our feet. It is *wilful sin*. “He that is born of GOD sinneth not.” Wilful sin cannot coexist with the Spirit of Adoption. Shall we ever run down the slope

again, and plunge into the mire, and sin deliberately once more? GOD knoweth. It may be; but GOD prevent it! And if we do thus again sin wilfully after tasting of the heavenly gift and being made partakers of the HOLY GHOST in beginning a life of holiness, shall we ever be renewed again unto repentance, and recover the ground lost? GOD knoweth. It may be; and GOD grant it! But even sins of infirmity must lie there in the plain. We cannot carry them up the mountain. They would soon drag us down. And we *can* leave them, too, behind. It is not the man under grace who says, "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." "For the law of the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS hath made me free from the law of sin and death;" and "what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," that the grace of GOD can and will do for those who are in CHRIST JESUS. The very "righteousness of the law" is "fulfilled in" those "who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Yet I suppose that some sins of weakness there will be to the last—only, not triumphant. They will no longer be our masters, but, like rebellious slaves, to be watched, kept down, overmastered.

This conquest of sin is no easy task. Our sins, alas! pursue us, like haunting phantoms from the

pestilential marshes, even far up the mountain side. Have we "escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust"? Poor sinners, struggling to set their feet upon the mountain, come to us to be helped in cleansing the mire from their souls. *Are our own souls clean?* Troubled consciences come to us and open their griefs. *Is the burden lifted from our own?* Well, all this is at the very foot of the mountain. Are we, teachers of men, to stand, then, and look up, and see our flocks climbing up before us? Is the sheep to show the way to the shepherd? Yet it is often so. GOD pardon us!

3. After conquest of sin comes the *acquisition of graces*. The different Christian graces may be compared to the different heights in the mountain range. There are many tracks which lead upwards. GOD leads not all by the same pathway. How shall we know which point He first bids us aim at? It is not so hard to tell. Suppose we know our besetting sin—the most ingrained, stubborn fault of our character and disposition. What is the opposite grace to this? That is the point GOD would have us first aim at. The course of grace is first to turn the sins of will into sins of weakness; secondly, so to strengthen the will as to refuse consent to sins of weakness; thirdly, so to lift the new man out of the old that the very graces once most lacking are now his

most steadfast aim. Let the impatient man mark where patience crowns a height, and bend all his efforts to win it. Let the irritable, hot-tempered, hasty in speech, seek meekness and gentleness. Let the passionate aim at purity; the apathetic at zeal; the cold-hearted at love; the careless at thoughtfulness; the idle at activity; the restless at calm. A considerable part of St. Gregory on the Pastoral Office is simply the embodiment of this principle—the formulation of rules for advice to different persons according to their natural bent and disposition. Behold Abraham, who surely lacked faith when he denied Sarah twice, by grace the father of the faithful. Behold Moses, whose spirit was so angered that he spake unadvisedly with his lips, by grace the meekest of men. Behold St. Peter, generous and noble of impulse though he was, yet rash and self-confident even unto presumption, by grace a Rock of the Church. Behold St. John, who once would have called down fire on the village which had offended, by grace the Apostle of Love. It is a beautiful sight to see grace conquering natural failings, and winning the opposite virtues.

4. The spiritual life needs for its growth *food*. A truer, better, more blessed use of the *means of grace* will surely mark and accompany advance in the spiritual life. Prayer will grow with growing life. Prayer brings growth of life, and growth



of life seeks expression in prayer. The habit of ejaculatory prayer will grow with a growing realisation of GOD's presence. The Bible will be read with an earnest desire to know GOD's will—read, not critically, but devotionally. There will be some attempt to acquire the difficult practice of meditation. I will speak of none of these. But of one thing let me speak. Growth of the spiritual life will surely be able to register itself by increasing devotion in Holy Communion. It will be more and more blessed to draw so nigh to our dear LORD. His special presence will be very dear to us. We shall learn more and more the intense spirituality of that act which is bound up more than any other of our spiritual life with outward circumstance. We shall welcome Him Who comes to our feast, not only with the water for the feet—the cleansing of our souls from the dust and stains of our daily sins, negligences, and ignorances; not only with the oil for the head—the intellectual preparation and due appreciation of the nature and mystery of our holy service; but also with the kiss—the fervent outpouring of heart affection—the clinging of the whole soul to One it loves.<sup>1</sup> It will be joy, strength, high privilege, to taste the pledges of His love, to know that we dwell in Him and He in us, that

<sup>1</sup> This spiritualising of our LORD's words to Simon the Pharisee is suggested by a sermon of Bishop King's.

we are one with Him and He with us. Here most of all shall we draw strength for our journey. Here most of all shall we refresh our weary souls with sweet draughts of the water of life. "Master, it is good for us to be here"—this will be our absorbing sensation. We shall be as on a Mount of Transfiguration, gazing on JESUS, hearing of His decease which He accomplished at Jerusalem. Aye, and we shall come down from the Mount, as perchance JESUS Himself did, when the people were so astonished at His appearance, reflecting still around us some rays of the Divine radiance into which we have entered—by our very life and bearing and spirit making men take knowledge of us that we have been with JESUS.

5. Growth of the spiritual life will manifest itself by growth of the three chief graces, *Faith, Hope, Love*.

*Faith*, which in its first stages is little more than dim, fitful, transitory glimpses of the realities of the unseen world,—a discerning indeed of these, but not *as* realities—rather as shadowy outlines of vague shapes, like the first glimmerings of light on the eyes of one born blind, seeing "men as trees,"—Faith will grow into a constant, vivid, unclouded vision of the world behind the veil. That world will, as Faith grows, become more real than this world of sense. Its presence

will be ever before us. It will be no effort to live in the consciousness of GOD's presence. We shall "look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." Our Faith will be to us indeed "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen"; that which brings the things we hope for in very substance, as it were, before us, and gives us evidence of the things unseen, as clear and potent as that of sight. But chiefly, in that unseen world, Faith will centre on one object—even a crucified GOD; and from that blessed root of Faith in JESUS CHRIST will spring up all loving affection, all bright confidence, all blissful adoration, all holy peace, all cheerful obedience. We shall find that "this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith." For "who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that JESUS is the Son of GOD?"

Then *Hope*. This is a feeble grace in many Christian souls. There is a good deal of *senti-ment* about Heaven; not much genuine *hope*. When we sing of "Jerusalem the golden," is it not more often the beauty of the words or of the music, or a sort of dreamy sense of dim, distant loveliness, such as we feel when we gaze in reverie on the piles of gold-fringed clouds in a sunset

sky, than the simple longing expectation of a glorious reality? To see GOD, to be with JESUS, to receive an inheritance with the saints in light, —have these things a place in the true, honest depths of our real selves? Yet Hope is joined with Faith and Love. It is almost a daughter grace of these. For, as there is no Hope where there is little Faith and Love, so where these are strong Hope will surely be. As Delitzsch says, in commenting on Hebrews xi. 1, "Hope is the blood-relation, because it is the offspring, of Faith. The proper object of Hope is the future; the proper object of Faith is the present but unseen. Hope is Faith's comforter, and Faith is Hope's stay." Strangers and pilgrims, we seek a country. Oh! that our hearts went forth more towards it! Oh! that we were more like children journeying home—full of bright, joyous anticipation, counting the very days! The Christians of apostolic times needed warning against impatience for the coming of the LORD. We are patient enough. But as the spiritual life grows, surely we shall long more and more for deliverance from these doubts and difficulties and failings and infirmities, and more and more for the light and the peace and the glory, and the very presence of Him Whom we love.

*Love.* Yes, and this too grows with the growing life. A little feeble, flickering flame at

first, often almost dying out, so dim and weak we scarce know whether it is there or not, to what a very fire of all-constraining ardour has this grace grown in many of the saints of GOD! "Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart." Hast thou ever, O my soul, obeyed this command for one single moment in thy whole life? Dost thou love GOD with half thy heart? or a tithe? It is hard to gauge and measure emotions. Thank GOD another test is allowed. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." "LORD, Thou knowest that I love Thee." "Thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love Thee." "It seems as if I did not. It seems, O LORD, as if I hated Thee. I have broken Thy commandments, despised Thy love, grieved Thy tender heart. Yet, oh! is there not some little love still in my heart? Yes, I do believe it. "Thou knowest that I love Thee." Do we say this with a clinging hope against hope that it may be true? There comes a Voice—oh! so gentle, so loving, so encouraging—"Feed My lambs"—"Feed My sheep." Perhaps it may mean, Vex not yourselves overmuch with introspective perplexities as to the force of the emotion. Rather look to its effects. See what you can do to show it. I will let you prove it by deeds of love. You may not be able to command great warmth of feeling; but you can command

acts of loving obedience. "Let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." It may be that emotions may deceive. They often do. An emotional religion—an imaginative religion—has great snares. But a living, active religion—this (though it too may deceive in its own way) has certainly less that is delusive about it. We *can* gauge and measure this. If, then, your hearts seem cold, dry, unloving, take comfort in JESUS' words. We will go and do His commandments, and show that our love is not all sentiment or empty words. Aye, but Love *is* a sentiment after all; it *is* a feeling, an emotion. Works of obedience are the fruit of Love, not Love itself. And even though in His great mercy CHRIST gives us the test of works, yet we must not be content that the Love itself be *only* seen in works. We ought to know that we love GOD—aye, and are growing in love to Him. If we love a human being, we know it, not only by *acts* of love, but also by the *sense* of love. Surely this must also be in our love to GOD. I know how hard it is to love an invisible Spirit. Some good men have held that we cannot love GOD here as the angels do, for His own sake, but that our love must be mainly gratitude. It may be so. But surely a warmer, more personal affection may flow forth to GOD Incarnate. Yes; one blessedness of the Incarnation

is to give us a nearer object of love. We seem to know Him. We can picture His kind, tender, wistful look of longing for our souls. We can almost see Him standing there, gazing so earnestly, knocking so patiently, waiting with such wonderful longsuffering, till we will let Him come in and take possession of our whole souls. Oh yes! To love JESUS—this seems not so hard. Pray we then for the HOLY SPIRIT to shed abroad in our hearts the Love of GOD, that we may indeed love Him who hath so loved us. So shall the Love of CHRIST constrain us in all our lives and actions, and we shall burn even here with something of that pure flame which shall light our whole souls with rapture inconceivable when we see Him as He is.

“Thou, LORD,” says St. Augustine, “commandest me to love Thee; grant what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt.”

### XIII

## Sin

GOD made us for Himself, capable of being drawn into blessed union with Himself, capable of growing up into His dear Son in all things "till we come unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST."

But we find within us a principle antagonistic to GOD, always hindering and marring our union with Him, always stunting and preventing our growth into CHRIST.

Sin, in principle, is the rebellion of the will against GOD. In act it is the transgression of GOD's law.

It is not well to speculate upon the mystery of the presence of sin in the world. GOD made us moral beings, capable of right and wrong, responsible for our actions, receptive of reward and punishment. It is not very profitable to ask why GOD did not, instead, make more angels, or more senseless brutes. We have to deal with facts, and sin is one of the surest as well as one of the saddest of facts.



So patent is the fact of sin that even the heathen—Horace, Cicero, Seneca—well knew and fully acknowledged its existence. Of course, they could not see it as we can, who can take the lamp GOD puts into our hands into the secret chamber. But they could not deny the kicking of nature against the restraints of duty. They had in them the evidence of the Fall no less clearly than St. Paul, when, speaking of the natural man, he said, “What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.”

It is very terrible, as well as very sad, that the creature should elect to be in opposition to the Creator.

I. Think, first, how hateful to GOD sin is; how vehemently it is denounced, with what scorn and horror it is condemned in GOD’S Word. Yet we scarcely need the testimony; it is enough to possess the first elements of knowledge as to GOD’S nature. He is infinitely pure and holy; and, if so, how horrible to Him must be all that is impure and unholy! And He is always looking down into my soul! No wonder Adam hid himself. It were well for me if I could avoid that piercing Eye. But I cannot. It is gazing now—on my naked heart. What does that Eye behold? Oh! a sight that even I, with all my sinful nature, shrink from looking on. Unclean, unclean! I am as the loathsome leper.

Turn Thy face from my sin, O LORD, for I cannot bear the burning light of Thine Eye upon me.

2. Think, next, of the multitude of past sins. There are

Sins of character, disposition, temperament.

Sins of thought and imagination.

Sins of wilfulness and presumption.

Sins of weakness and unguardedness.

Sins of tongue, and sins of act.

Sins of omission, and sins of commission.

Sins of childhood, sins of boyhood, sins of mature years.

Sins known, and sins unknown.

Alas! in number alone, how terrible!

3. Let us meditate, thirdly, on the mysterious power of each single act of sin. No sin stands alone, and independent of all that has gone before and that follows after. Each sin is a link in a chain. Habits are the outcome of repeated acts, and by each act we are helping to form a habit. By each sin we wind a fresh strand of silken cord around us. It has been well said, "Sin begins like a spider's web, and ends like a cart-rope." Are we or have we been far along the wrong road? We were not so at first. Look at the child. His little sins diverge by a very small angle from the line of right. But let two lines

diverge ever so little, yet, if prolonged, they get wider and wider apart. The sinner's path began by a very small divergence from the narrow way. Look in old age, and, if GOD's mercy has not turned him back, see what the gape of the angle is now. Oh! sins are not separate things, each with its own guilt cut off from all the rest. No: they are ever making us what we are to be; each one even if by the smallest addition, making the chain stronger, the habit more difficult to break. Sin is like some enchantress weaving her silken threads, and twining them round and round her victim, till at last she sees she has him safe, and then claps her hands and cries, 'Now thou art mine!' O GOD, save us from her power. "Make haste, O GOD, to deliver us"!

4. "The wages of sin is death." It surely must be so. GOD cannot let sin enter into His presence. It must be cast out. It must be gathered out of His kingdom. What can await it, and him in whom it dwells, but "everlasting destruction from the presence of the LORD"? It is its natural, deserved, appointed end. "Death"—no death of the body, which may be life of the soul; but undying death, "outer darkness," "where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched." "LORD save me; I perish!"

5. *My sin.* No more sin in the abstract. We

will come to closer quarters. *My sin*—what is it? Dost thou know, O my soul? But lo! as I look to see my sin, I behold many sins. It is Legion. Shall we turn over the foul heap and see if there are any sins there of which our conscience is or ought to be afraid? I heard a very dreadful thing once. I was talking with a layman, a banker's clerk, and he told me what I could scarcely believe, yet I could not doubt him. He said he should like me to know this fact—namely, that he had heard more to shock him—more grossness of conversation and impurity of tale and jest—from the lips of clergy than from those of laymen. I hope he unconsciously exaggerated from the horror with which he regarded that “jesting which is not convenient” in any, proceeding from such a source. I am sure at least he had been very unhappy in his clerical acquaintance. But he added, ‘I am too firmly grounded in the faith of the Church to be shaken by this; but had I not been, I do not know what might have been the evil consequences to me.’ You will forgive me for telling you this. He, my informant, said I might some day do good by naming it. My brothers, you will not think that I could suppose any such warning needed by any of you. You are all filled with distress at the disclosure. Yes. Yet GOD knoweth whether there be not among us some one who, in con-

versation with a very intimate friend, has repeated or listened to an impure thing; some one who has not quite shrunk from showing intimacy with the defiling details of some notorious divorce case; some one who has not had courage to stop conversation suggestive of evil, even if not taking part in it; some one who by his general tone and bearing in society may have led another to think, 'These clergy are not much more particular than other people.'

*My sins! My sins!* What are they? As a priest of God's Church, how have I sinned?

Is it, if not sin in word of mouth, yet sin in the secret thought of the heart? An unrestrained imagination? The light, unguarded playing of thought over unhallowed things? Perhaps not very definite conceptions, not very deliberate approaches, yet frequent rapid glances of the fancy towards evil, like the wheelings of some insect about the perilous sweetness of some poison plant? An eye unguarded? A curiosity not wholly pure? A secret, unrecognised pleasure in seeing when it were better not to see?

Many a one would tremble to allow knowingly thoughts of impurity to rest on the soul; would tremble to seek deliberately the indulgence of the eye; and yet so subtle is the evil, so self-deceiving the heart, that he is not altogether displeased when these things seem to come unsought,

by chance (if it be by chance) for a moment now and then.

*My sins! My sins! What are they? I am a priest of GOD. Of what am I guilty?*

Is it luxury? Not extravagance, not gross self-indulgence; but perchance the dislike of unpleasant things; the avoiding of irksome duties; the frittering away of time; the liking to visit only the good or the friendly, and so neglecting souls which may be in more need of help; the doing things less well than we could through not taking pains?

*My sins! My sins! What are they? I am vowed to CHRIST's service. How have I failed?*

Has it been want of faith, so that this world has been ever present to me, and I have lived with little remembrance, with scarcely any consciousness, of the things unseen?

Has it been want of love, so that I have cared but little for the souls which JESUS loved so as to give His life for them on the Cross?

Has it been want of prayer, so that I have lacked spiritual gifts and spiritual power, because I have not from my heart asked for them?

Alas! these, and more! How many more? And all these have been against knowledge, for I have known the right; and against mercy, for GOD has given me abundant blessings. To sin against law is grievous. It is more grievous to

sin against light. It is most grievous of all to sin against love. "God be merciful to me *the* sinner"—yea, "chief of sinners"!

6. "The Blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin." That Blood was shed for me. My sins demanded that tremendous Sacrifice.

O JESUS, hast Thou loved me so much, and yet can I love Thee so little!

## XIV

### Wholesome Examples and Patterns to the Flock of Christ

THIS we are bound by our Ordination vow to be, and to make our families to be, "as much as in us lieth."

Nor is this the least momentous nor the least difficult to fulfil of our vows.

That this vow is not fulfilled by a mere moral and irreproachable life is most certain. But let me begin at the very bottom, though I am almost ashamed. What shall we say of the stumbling-blocks put by clergy in the way of their flocks? I could give you, oh! so frightfully sad a list of real cases. Bear with me a little if I tell things which will make you burn with indignation and shudder with horror, not to warn you against such things now, but to warn you against a laxity of habit, a secularity of tone, a secret unreality and hollowness in your own personal religion, a good-natured acquiescence in ways of others which you feel to be unworthy, which have led men—aye,



vowed priests of GOD's Church—to such things at last.

Of flagrant scandals the most frequent are those caused by drunkenness. I could tell you of one parish priest drunk in his church on Ash-Wednesday ; of another more than once on weekdays in Lent. It is hateful to say such things. But oh ! my brothers, what was the *beginning* of these things ? When and how did the habit form ? Oh ! sometimes it is such a little beginning. Perhaps the seeming necessity for support in a time of depression ; perhaps the recognised inability to meet and go through a time of very severe work without such support ; perhaps good-natured companionship with one of less scrupulous habits. Oh ! it needs watchfulness. And for the love of the Church of CHRIST—nay, for the love of CHRIST, Who loved His Church and died for it—might not the stronger among us deny ourselves even the lawful use, in horror and hatred of an abuse so ruinous to the souls of our flocks ? It is not the fashion now to drink to excess. But do you think the servants in some great house have never said, with a laugh, of the minister who is to speak to them of their souls' welfare the next Sunday, ' He likes his glass as well as another ' ?

I could tell of things more horrible still—things which have made the parson the theme of

the ribald jest in the beer-house, and the object of the righteous scorn of all decent people. Where was the *beginning* of these things? Was it an unguarded eye? or an unrestrained imagination? or the interest taken in some miserable divorce case? or a seemingly innocent familiarity and affectionateness of manner? God knoweth. But there *was* a beginning.

I know of cases where absolute dishonesty (not to use a harsher word) has become habitual. Carelessness as to keeping accounts, dilatoriness and unpunctuality as to payments, perhaps at first little more than inexperience and thoughtlessness, have slipped into worse and worse, till offertories and collections lie unpaid so long that at last they cannot be paid, and the pressure of the more exacting claims is perpetually postponing the settlement of debts which there is no auditor to detect and no claimant to demand. Where did all this *begin*?

I know parishes where the wonder is that any abide faithful to the Church which (in the person of her minister) is so unfaithful to them. God pardon us!

Well, the Clergy are 24,000, and the cases of public scandal are not many. But there ought to be *none*. And I dare not pretend that there are no more than find their way into newspapers. Perhaps only a small proportion do so. At least,

many bad cases escape publicity by the difficulty of legal proof, yet are no less ruinous to souls, and no less horrible and hateful.

But I leave grosser scandals. I have named them (not without some doubt and hesitation) that we may not forget what vowed priests of God have become, either through the downward lapse of progressive evil, or through sudden assaults upon an unguarded heart.

What is the next stage? Let me try to picture it. A clergyman may lead a moral, irreproachable life as regards his conduct in the eyes of the world, he may be unstained by sins against sobriety, purity, or honesty, and yet he may be a most *unwholesome* "example and pattern to the flock." Here is one (I am not about to draw on imagination) spending a large part of his time in the billiard-room and never visiting the poor and sick (I hope this is a solitary case); here is another hunting and shooting and fishing and dancing, exactly as his lay neighbours do, and, of course, neglecting his parish; here is another a devoted card-player; here another idling his time away in sheer laziness, smoking, novel-reading—I care not what. Now, such men are simply perjured. I know this is a strong expression, but weak expressions do not fit strong evils. I am not pronouncing judgment on any one of the things I have named *in itself*. I am

not careful to appraise the comparative harmlessness of one pursuit rather than another. The man who, being vowed to the life of a priest in the Church of God, lives the life of a geologist or of a horticulturist is equally a perjured man. He is breaking his Ordination vows day by day. But if there be pursuits and amusements which to many of his parishioners would seem more inconsistent than others with his holy calling, it is impossible to disguise from oneself that devotion to these is an aggravated offence. I have no desire to pronounce a stern sentence upon a brother clergyman for being seen in the hunting-field, or in the ball-room, though he had much better never be seen there; but the hunting parson or the dancing parson is not the man to be called to the death-bed of the worldly parishioner to guide his penitence and prepare him for heaven. Even if he have so small a parish as to have abundant leisure, his tone and manner of life will assuredly drag down the standard of religion, and put a stumbling-block in the path of many a poor ignorant soul, needing, perhaps longing for, a helping hand to rise above the low standard of surrounding society and the deadening influences of a worldly life. There is a very painful but very instructive book lately published, called "John Ward, Preacher," in which there is a scene which it might profit us all to think about. The

clergyman, who is described as a pleasant, kindly, easy-going man, visits the doctor, with whom he has had many a friendly chat and many a fishing excursion, on his death-bed, and is appealed to by his dying friend as to the reality of the truths he has taught, and his own entire acceptance of them, and *he finds himself dumb*: he cannot answer. He has never spoken seriously on such themes before, and it is too late then. There was nothing wrong in his pleasant companionship, but there was *something wanting*. "Will you be diligent in prayers, and in reading of the Holy Scriptures, and in such studies as help to the knowledge of the same, laying aside the study of the world and the flesh?" To this the answer is, "I will endeavour myself so to do, the LORD being my helper." "Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves, and your families, according to the doctrine of CHRIST; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of CHRIST?" To this the answer is, "I will apply myself thereto, the LORD being my helper." O my brothers! can these vows be reconciled by any ingenuity with a life in which any other study holds the first place, and not the study of GOD'S Word; or in which the tone and bearing is that of the world, and not that which marks the man as a man separated from the

world by his sacred calling? I do pray you, ask not, 'What is the standard of others? What is the standard of my brother clergy?' But ask, 'What is the standard I have vowed in my Ordination to aim at?' And remember, a man, to be a wholesome example and pattern, must stand on a higher level, must aim at a higher standard, than that of those to whom he is an example and pattern. The flock must see that we are living to GOD, seeking first the kingdom of GOD and His righteousness, men who have renounced the world, men who have given their lives, their time, their powers, their interests—*themselves*—to the work to which they have been called; else we cannot be wholesome examples and patterns. Even in mien and manner and dress it must be so. It is surely a shame to a clergyman to seem ashamed of appearing like one. The clergyman who adopts a secular style and dress seems to imitate those false prophets spoken of by Zechariah (xiii. 4, 5), who, after their falling away, are made to express shame of their former calling: "It shall come to pass in that day that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision, when he hath prophesied; neither shall they wear a rough garment, to deceive: but he shall say, I am no prophet, I am an husbandman; for man taught me to keep cattle from my youth." The unclerical clergy-

man seems to be always saying, 'Pray don't look upon me as a clergyman. I would rather be mistaken for a soldier or a country gentleman.' If a man is ashamed of looking like a clergyman, he had much better not be one.<sup>1</sup>

But I must ask you to go yet a stage higher with me. A clergyman may be not only moral, but diligent in his calling—not only irreproachable, but one who knows what his duties are, and tries to do them. Does any one say, What more can you want? I answer, Much more. I want *holiness*. He who would be indeed a wholesome example and pattern to the flock must be a holy liver, a man of prayer, a man of faith, a man of love, a spiritual man, heavenly minded. Indeed, it will not do to stop short of this. You may get credit for activity; you may win applause as a preacher; you may be an excellent organiser, and have all your parochial machinery in perfect order; but you will not win many souls for the Master unless, beyond all this, your people feel that you are a man whose own inner life is hid with CHRIST in GOD. Do you say, But this is a secret thing of which no man can take cognisance: it may be right and well for myself; but so far as

<sup>1</sup> Is not the growing habit among the Clergy of wearing moustaches open to some degree of this censure? Nothing is commoner than to hear the Laity expressing their dislike to it as unclerical. Harder epithets are sometimes used.

my example goes, men can only judge of my outer actions? Nay, brother, they will judge of thy inward spirit too; for that inward spirit is as a lamp which will shine through all the outer life and bearing. O GOD! save us from darkening the way for any poor soul struggling along the rough road! GOD save us from putting a stumbling-block in any weak brother's way! The voice of JESUS once cried in the Temple as He taught, "I am the Light of the world." Aye; but the same Divine lips cried also, "YE are the light of the world."



## XV

# Holiness of Life the Secret of Ministerial Success

ONE whose aim is success will seldom win holiness. One whose aim is holiness will seldom fail of success. Yet I am afraid of suggesting a false motive. It would be dreadful to aim at holiness *for the sake of* success. Holiness is a wrong word for any life that has its spring in some ulterior object of desire, however in itself desirable, or in anything other than GOD. So I do not bid you aim at holiness that you may be successful parish priests. Only, you will be successful parish priests if you are holy. Aim at holiness for its own sake.

Now I must guard myself. I am sometimes afraid of taking too high ground, partly lest I should seem to have myself reached a high level, and partly lest I should discourage others who are, like myself, only struggling upwards. So I would not deny that GOD, in His mercy, does allow and accept motives lower than the highest

—only as helps to the highest, and not as substitutes for them. GOD help us, if nothing may be accepted unless done from the highest motive alone! So, if the sense that it may help and bless others be some incentive to a holy life, we will not greatly blame. Only, we must take care that it be not *the* motive.

Now let us meditate upon the link which joins together this cause and effect, not with a view to leading us to seek holiness as the best policy, but to avoid seeking, or fancying we can attain, success without holiness.

Perhaps I could hardly illustrate my subject better than by recalling to your memory Ary Shäffer's well-known picture of Dante and Beatrice. She, the heavenly guide, walks on a higher level, leading on her earthly disciple, who gazes up earnestly into her face, drinking in the lessons of wisdom she imparts. But where are her eyes fixed? Not on him, but on heaven.

Underlying this whole subject is the great law God has imposed upon us—that constant contemplation of any marked character tends to reproduce it. This is the law of influence. All strong characters, bad no less than good, possess this power of reproduction in full measure. But *all* possess it more or less. It has been often noticed that persons who are much together become more like each other. There is

a tremendous responsibility upon all for the use of their power of influence. But before thinking more of our exercise of this power upon others, let us think how this law should act upon ourselves, and that in the highest sphere of our being. What else is this which is written, "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass"—literally, 'reflecting as a mirror' (*we* are the mirror)—"the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD"? It is as we behold and reflect the Divine excellencies of the LORD that we win some measure of their grace ourselves. As we study and learn His character He is "formed in us." And may we not carry this thought even higher? For what is our hope for hereafter? "We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is." Like Him, because seeing Him as He is! It is not only the vision we long and hope for. That will doubtless be very glorious. It will be full of ecstatic joy to see GOD, to gaze upon "the King in His beauty." But it is more. It is the *transforming* vision we look for—yes, the *transforming* vision! to see, and *therefore* to be like; to behold, and beholding to be changed into the same image.

But we must come back to our closer subject. If *then* it will be the seeing the King in His

beauty, *now* it is the "looking unto JESUS," which is to work such wonders in us, which is to bring out in us the Divine image. I think it is not CHRIST's precepts which more deeply impress, but His character. It is not, 'Be ye meek and lowly in heart' that holds the spell, but "I am meek and lowly in heart." Surely this is one reason, perhaps the chief reason, for the fourfold Gospel picture, so wondrous in the simplicity of its details, yet so many-sided in its presentation of its great subject. It is just a holding up of CHRIST in all the beauty of His infinite holiness, that we may gaze, and by gazing may be like.

So too with us and those before whom our lives are lived and our words are spoken. The living of the life speaks more loudly than the vocal word. Aye, and it has more power to command obedience. Biography does more to form character than books of moral essays. More souls are converted by the holy lives than by the eloquent preacher. You have doubtless heard the story of the great mission preacher who travelled about with a poor lay brother, and had such wonderful success that he was continually thanking GOD that so many were converted by his preaching. But GOD sent him a vision or dream, in which an angel seemed to appear to him, and to tell him that it was not his preaching, but the prayers of the poor lay brother who

kneelt on the pavement below, that had really won the blessing.

Now we must not forget that prayer is the hidden spring of all holiness: without it holiness cannot be. O my brothers! I dare not speak of the necessity of holiness and omit to urge this. For if we think holiness is a mould and fashion of the outward life, a system of high principles and scrupulous conscientiousness, a straining after the CHRIST-like graces, while we forget that it is the life of GOD in the soul, the life that flows from GOD, and is won and nurtured by prayer and sacrament, we shall surely fail. We shall be building up a fragile superstructure upon no solid foundation, and it will surely fall.

But to-day it is the outward manifestation of the holy life that we are contemplating, for the inner springs of our being no eye can see but GOD's. It is the influence of the holy life upon your flocks that I am asking you to weigh. You will remember that the same Divine lips which once cried, "*I am the Light of the world,*" also spake the words, "*Ye are the light of the world.*" Yes, ye became He. He shining with intrinsic, ye with borrowed light; He the Sun, and ye the planets. Yet the planets shine, reflecting, as a mirror, the glory of their Sun.

There are two dangers to be avoided in this

matter, one on either side. The first is Hypocrisy in every faintest degree. In these days few are tempted to put on a sanctimonious, unreal manner; our English national character will save us from that. But may there not be some little peril of overacting reverence in our Church services? I cannot but think that excessive attention to minor ritual observances does in these days tempt to some little unreality. It is dangerous to the character when outward acts outstrip the inward spirit of reverence. I would be simple, natural, and very reverent in spirit. Then it will be well. I do not want to be hypocritical. But I have known very demonstrative men of a really irreverent spirit. The other danger is not infrequent. It is that of shrinking from letting our religion be seen, putting on an air more worldly than our heart, conforming to the manner of the majority through dread of hypocrisy, unreality, formalism. I am sure we ought not to be ashamed to look what we are—men set apart, men of a heavenly calling, men who have to deal with heavenly things. Even clergymen need to be reminded that they must confess CHRIST before men, and not be ashamed of their Master and His cause.

Holiness of living is an inward character expressed in outward life—a light burning within, in the inner shrine of the being, but shining through.

And what is this light save the reflection of the true Light? What is this inner character which is to express itself in outward action save likeness to CHRIST? Yes, this is holiness—the CHRIST-like spirit exhibited in the CHRIST-like life. Men should be able to take knowledge of us that we have been with JESUS. If so, then assuredly the meekness, the patience, the sympathy, the humility of JESUS will be very marked features in us. In all our intercourse with our flocks it will be seen that we are striving to copy Him. His unselfishness, His self-sacrifice, will be in some measure reflected in us. Now I do not say this will always and at once overcome all enmity and opposition. The world is not generally enamoured of real holiness. It is too great a reproach to it. We must not mind if bad men, if worldly men, do not like us. Mind! why, what right has the servant to think of faring better than the Master? But if holiness is what it ought to be, graced by meekness and long-suffering, it will assuredly in the end win respect and soften enmity.

Then in preaching—holiness is a sermon without an end, and yet that wearies not. A holy life is always preaching. The lips may not be eloquent, nor the thoughts ready; yet the words will be simple, truthful, humble words, and backed by a holy life, will fall with weight on the hearer. St. Jerome says, “A holy simplicity is mightier

than unsanctified eloquence." The words of St. Bernard (words which I have chosen to be engraved on the Pastoral Staff for the Diocese of Wakefield) are very familiar: "Pasce verbo: pasce vitâ: pasce sanctarum orationum fructu." Goldsmith, speaking of the devout pastor, says, "Truth from his lips prevailed with double sway."

Let me, in conclusion, remind you of two sayings of St. Paul. To the elders of Ephesus he says, "Take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock." To Timothy he writes, "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine." Thyself before the flock; thyself before the doctrine. Then, my brothers, if you would be faithful parish priests, if you would be a blessing to your people, if you would at the Great Day render your account with joy, the first and the last counsel I would give you is, BE HOLY.





## XVI

### Faith

SHALL we try to clear our thoughts as to the meaning of this word 'Faith,' so highly honoured in Holy Scripture, so familiar to our lips and ears, and yet often so hazily and imperfectly apprehended? Thank God it is not necessary to gain accurate notions of what Faith *is* in order to possess it. There are thousands of Christian people, whose lives are governed by a true and living Faith, who could give but a very poor account of that very power by which they live. Yet we teachers of men should surely try to gain a definite idea of the words we use in our teaching.

It always seems to me that the simplest and clearest description of Faith in the Bible is found in the words, "While we look, not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Here we stand in the midst of, surrounded on all sides by, ourselves (at least on one side of our being) a part of, the great (to *us* at least the great) visible universe—"the

things which are seen." The world of sense is ever present to us. It besets us with the intensity of its presence. We cannot escape from its hundred-handed grasp. It is always painting its pictures in our eyes. It is always dinning its sounds into our ears. We touch it palpably (even if for the most part unconsciously by reason of habit) on all sides always. It is very, very difficult to shake off the overwhelming impression of its reality, and its presence, and its nearness to us. Two things seem borne in upon each of us with resistless force all day long, as the great verities which he cannot doubt—his own existence, and the existence of the "things which are seen" around him. It is this, the incessant, the inevitable, the exclusive *presence* to the senses of the "things which are seen," which gives to them their overmastering power. They reign triumphant in the simple might of their obtrusiveness. We are unresisting slaves, because our master, the great world of sense, is always standing by.

But "we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Yes, there is another eye that gazes besides this bodily eye. There is another world that is gazed upon besides this world of sense. Faith is that eye of the soul which sees the unseen. Faith pierces the veil that hangs all round us, painted,

like some panorama, with the idle outlines of the world of sight, and beholds the eternal things beyond. Its sphere is a universe of vast spiritual realities. It dwells in the very presence of the infinite.

Let me remind you of another description of Faith given us in Holy Writ. "Now Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Or, in the Revised Version, "Now Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the proving of things not seen." Perhaps this may be paraphrased thus: Faith is that power within us which brings the things we hope for substantially before us, and which proves and demonstrates to us the truth of the things we cannot see.

Taking these two descriptions of Faith together, I think we may say that Faith, as represented in Holy Scripture, is that power within us which *realises the unseen*. It always seems to me that the great work of Faith is to realise. Its province is so to look at the things which are not seen, that they become to us intense and awful realities. Thus Faith is most truly spoken of as the eye of the soul,—that eye which beholds—yes, and not only beholds, but beholds with a vivid and abiding sense of their truth and majesty—the eternal verities of the world unseen. To Faith's eye, when it is keen and clear, the mighty curtain

of the visible is drawn aside, and the invisible things of God stand out in all their splendour and immensity.

My brothers, is it not by this power of gazing behind the veil and realising the unseen that Faith wins its victory over the world? We have seen how tremendous is the might of the visible from its mere presence and insistence. What might can we bring to bear upon this, except that which Faith wields when it sets before us the presence of the invisible? If a group of children were playing with some paltry toys in front of a great curtain, or gazing with delight upon some rudely-painted scene upon the curtain itself, how would you most surely win them from their idle devotion to these things, and make them quite forget their toys and the picture? You know that if you could suddenly draw up that curtain, and reveal to them a scene of magic beauty which it had hidden from their sight, you would have gained your wish. There would be no more thought of the toys, no more remembrance of the picture. So it is with Faith. What can rescue us from the tyranny of the visible? What can turn us aside from our silly toys? What can lift our gaze from the painted curtain of this world of sense? What but some power which shall lift the veil and display to us the glorious things beyond? "This is the

victory that overcometh the world, even our Faith."

You will note that thus far I have wholly shut out from our regard the special nature and character of the *objects* upon which Faith is exercised. I have tried simply to look at Faith as it is in its own nature and essence. I have sought to describe it as a power or faculty existing within man's spiritual nature. I have said that its true work is to *realise*. I have not yet spoken of that which is realised, except so far as to assert that it belongs to the domain of the spiritual—"the things which are not seen." I need hardly say that the nature and character of the objects of Faith must enter very largely into any practical discussion of the matter. But meanwhile, how much soever the objects of Faith may either differ in themselves, or differ in the degree in which they are apprehended and known; how much soever clearer and advancing revelations may throw out the objects of Faith themselves into brighter light and sharper distinctness, or deeper study and more earnest thought may enable us to discern more intelligently what and of what sort these objects are; let us observe that the Faith itself, as an inner power and faculty of the soul, is unchanged, and its operation unchanged. Whether it be the heathen philosopher feeling after a GOD and virtue, and for these, his unseen

objects of search, sacrificing the "things which are seen"; or whether it be the poor peasant hanging up his one hope on the Cross of JESUS; still it is the same. In each Faith is the power which looks at the unseen; in each the work of Faith is realisation.

See how this thought helps to clear a difficulty which is sometimes felt as to the manner in which Faith is spoken of in the Bible, especially in the great Faith Chapter, the 11th of Hebrews. There we have a glorious catalogue of the mighty deeds done in the olden times by Faith. But when we find in that catalogue, not only an Enoch but a Rahab, not only an Abraham but a Samson, we are almost startled at the conjunction. What, we are tempted to ask, is she whose Faith, so far as is revealed to us, was no more than a belief in the victorious power of the God of Israel, before which her city was to fall, —is she to be numbered with him who "walked with GOD," and who "was not found, because GOD had translated him"! Is he whose Faith seems to us of even a lower type, who acknowledged his great physical strength as a gift of GOD, and wrought his feats of valour as champion of GOD's people—is he to be set side by side with the Father of the Faithful, who, "when he was tried, offered up Isaac"! Yes; for what if little were revealed to one, and much to another;

what if one were able by reason of long use of the light given to discern and apprehend truths which were veiled from another by his want of spiritual training and the dimness of his spiritual sight ; still each one, in the instances recorded, looked, according to his power and his gifts, "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." Each one so far realised the unseen as to make *it*, and not the visible, the motive of choice and of action. Can we doubt that, had Rahab been called to entertain, not the Israelitish spies, but Paul and Silas telling of CHRIST crucified, her Faith would have embraced this truth even as it embraced that of the might of the GOD of Israel? Can we doubt that, had Samson been elected in the latter days to be the champion of a spiritual warfare, and to go forth to do battle with the hosts of darkness, his Faith would have nerved him to that conflict, even as it nerved him to the destruction of the enemies of his people?

But now let us turn round and look the other way. We have been contemplating Faith ; we will turn to the great objects of Faith. We have been gazing within upon the secret springs of human action, dissecting, as it were, that eye of the soul which we call Faith ; let us gaze without, and see if we may understand something concerning those things upon which Faith is exercised.

If Faith be the same in its inherent nature, whether it look forth from the visible upon the dimmest shadow, the barest outline, of the eternal verities of the world unseen, or whether it regard with adoring ecstasy of vivid contemplation the infinite perfections of the SAVIOUR exalted to His mediatorial throne, yet it is very certain that practically the nature and character of the object of Faith must in the greatest possible degree influence and alter its exercise. Is it not so with bodily sight? Bodily sight, by presenting to us a great variety of objects, supplies us with a great variety of motives of action. But these motives plainly differ in force and character as the objects of sight differ. Thus we are very differently affected by such different objects as a distant mountain, some obstacle immediately before us in the path we are walking upon, and a very dear friend. The first of these objects suggests no perceptible motive for action; the second instantly turns our steps on one side; the third calls up sensations of love and pleasure. So with the things which are not seen. If Faith's eye beholds only some very dim and distant object, far away from the sphere of our daily life and actions, there is little to affect us as a motive of practical conduct. If, again, Faith has a clear and single insight into the right or wrong of the course immediately before us, it is easy to understand that



it at once supplies a ready motive of action. If, once more, Faith gazes upon a *Personal* object, beholding One, the very sense of Whose existence, or nearness, or presence is fitted to arouse in the heart emotions of trust, or love, or admiration, then most plainly the exercise of Faith begets in us of necessity those personal emotions. It is not that this last is a higher *sort* of Faith, but that it is a higher *exercise* of Faith, because exercised upon a higher object. Do we ask, then, why Faith, as we Christians understand the word—why *Christian* Faith—is so necessarily the root of good works, so necessarily an active, living, energising faculty in the soul? Behold the answer: it is because the objects of our Faith absolutely force this character upon it. Faith draws back the curtain of sense and looks at “the things which are not seen.” Yes; but what *are* these things? Dim, shifting, fugitive shadows? Misty outlines of mighty forms, which, as we draw nigh, vanish, like some mirage, into nothingness? Nay. Dim they may be, but it is with the dimness of the eye that looks upon them, and not with any dimness of their own; for “now we see through a glass darkly,” and if it were not so, we should be blinded with the flashings of the light which no man may approach unto. Incomprehensible they must be, for the finite cannot comprehend the infinite, and “now we know in part” only.

But what *are* these things which Faith sees behind the veil? I dare not count or measure them. But this I know, that, as Faith gazes, there stand forth in all the power and distinctness of intense reality those things which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man," as that heart is in its natural carnality, but which "GOD hath revealed" unto His own "by His SPIRIT;" for the "SPIRIT searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of GOD." There behold we a FATHER of infinite love; a SON reigning in His glorious twofold nature—perfect GOD to save to the uttermost, perfect Man to feel for the weakest; a HOLY SPIRIT, life-giving, inspiring, indwelling. There behold we the "Mount Sion," "the city of the living GOD, the heavenly Jerusalem," and "the innumerable company of angels," and the "spirits of just men made perfect." There behold we "the glorious company of the apostles," "the goodly fellowship of the prophets," and "the noble army of martyrs," praising GOD. There listen we to the surgings of the New Song before the throne. But in the midst of all there lifts itself up once more—(nay, not 'once more,' for to Faith, as to GOD, the past is ever present)—there lifts itself up, enshrined in awful radiance, the Cross of Calvary. There Faith's eye rests, and is riveted. There it beholds the mystery of mysteries, the glory of glories, the GOD-Man

dying to redeem His people. It is enough. Can Faith realise this one stupendous scene,—can this love, unutterable, immeasurable, be once known and apprehended even in part,—can such truths as those of the Incarnation and the Atonement be once present to the soul as intensely glorious realities,—and yet no fruit appear? See how “Faith worketh by love.” Faith sets us in the very presence of One Whom, once known, once realised in His boundless wealth of love, it is impossible not to love in return. “We love Him because He first loved us.” Love is the link between Faith and works. We work because we love, and we love because we believe.

And mark how these two most blessed Christian graces react upon each other. If Faith must in the nature of things precede Love, because it is impossible to love One Whom we have never yet presented to our minds as a real, living, present Being, yet at once Love draws Faith on to higher stages and more perfect exercise. It is, again, the same as with bodily sight. We cannot love a person whom we have not seen. Sight comes before love; yet when once we have begun to love, we long and strive to see the more. And if we put no bar to hinder it, this will be the way with Faith. Faith shows us One Whom we cannot but Love. Then Love of this One draws Faith on to fuller realisation of Him Who is so lovable. But

to realise more is in such case to love more. And so Faith and Love advance, twin sisters, hand in hand, each drawing the other on and on, till they come at last to the door which one of them may not pass; for Faith must stop where Love goes in to see and be for ever satisfied.

There is one question more I must try to answer. It will occur to most of you. What, then, is *justifying* Faith? How is Faith said to justify more than Love or Obedience? I think what I have already said will help us to the answer. I need not say that Faith does not justify because it has more merit than Love or Obedience, or any other grace. But Faith takes us to Him Who alone can truly justify. Faith casts the soul on the merits and mediation of the SAVIOUR. To be justified by Faith means simply to be justified by CHRIST, Who is known and apprehended and realised by Faith.

Now, we dare not treat this great subject without going down into our own souls, that we may see what our Faith is. May I not give voice to your thoughts, my brothers, and, as we each thus scrutinise our inner man, cry, 'Alas! for my miserable want of Faith! Alas! for this blindness and deadness of soul to the things unseen! Alas! for this tyranny of the things of sense!' Well, there is one comfort. If our Faith is very dim and clouded and transient and variable,

so was the Faith of greater ones in the kingdom of heaven than we shall ever be. "O ye of little Faith," — "O faithless generation," — "If ye had Faith as a grain of mustard seed," — "Because thou hast seen, thou hast believed," — so spake JESUS oftentimes when on earth. But to whom? To the self-complacent Scribes and Pharisees? To the thoughtless, ignorant crowd? No; He spake these things to the chosen princes of His kingdom, to the inner circle of His disciples. The nearest of kin to Him "believed not in Him." The most gifted of all—the very Apostles of Faith and Love — "as yet believed not the Scriptures." It was not the two on the road to Emmaus only who were "slow to believe." Oh! we will hope, then, though our Faith be almost nothing. If the soul's eye be but just learning to see,—if as yet it can scarcely bear the light,—if it scarcely knows what it looks upon,—we will hope. Indeed, we may hope. The light will grow. Yes, even here, among these mists and shadows and hidings of the light, so that neither sun nor stars appear for many days, there shall come gleams and dawnings of the glory which lies beyond. We do not look for the "perfect day" here. That must be when the veil is rent in twain, and the eye is purged from every dimness, and all mists and shadows are burnt up in the blaze of eternal

truth. Faith is for the dawn—not for the “perfect day.” Faith is for the clouds and shadows of earth—not for the unveiled splendour of heaven. O GOD, the clouds are sometimes very dark! Give us Thy great gift of Faith, that through some rent we may discern the heaven’s calm, eternal blue. O JESUS, touch our blind eyes that we may look at “the things which are not seen,” and see, and know, and love, and adore Thee! O HOLY GHOST, “enable with perpetual light the dulness of our blinded sight”! Take of the things of CHRIST and show them unto us.

“LORD, we believe: help Thou our unbelief.”  
Amen.

## XVII

### Love and its Sources

WHEN St. Paul writes to counsel St. Timothy as to the fulfilment of his duties to the Church at Ephesus, over which he was called to preside, the first thing which the Apostle feels it necessary to say, is to remind him of one matter which had been specially mentioned as a reason for desiring him to remain at Ephesus, while the Apostle himself went on into Macedonia. This was that he should charge some not to teach any other doctrine than they had received from the Apostle, and not to "give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions rather than godly edifying." These persons, who were to be so warned, had plainly been occupying themselves with vain and profitless disputes about unimportant things, instead of with the great, all-important principles of the Christian Faith. Possibly the same error may not be quite unknown in modern times. "Now the end of the commandment," writes the Apostle, "is charity." But what is meant by the "end of

the commandment"? In the Greek the word for "commandment" is the same as that translated "charge" in the 3rd verse, and the meaning is, 'the end, the point, of the charge you must give is charity.' Now, 'charity' is only another word for 'love.' There is only one word in the Greek for both of our English words, and I think the authors of the Revised Version were right in substituting the larger and more comprehensive word 'love' for 'charity,' which we usually associate only with Love on its human side, and even with restricted senses of that, in such passages as the 13th chapter of the 1st Epistle to the Corinthians. So the Apostle would say, 'You have among you teachers (perhaps among the clergy) who need instructing in the things they should teach. They are making the people take up foolish and unimportant questions, and neglecting the really great and important things. Their teaching is "vain jangling." They do not understand what they are talking about. Now the point of your charge—the real thing I am so anxious you should press upon them as that which they should teach—is Love, "out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned."'" Thus what St. Paul puts first as the great subject which Christian teachers should insist upon and inculcate, may be described as—*Love and its sources.*



I think if I could ask St. Paul what it would be best I should speak about to you, he would say, 'Don't waste time over trivial matters and unedifying questions, but speak about the best and greatest things.' So this is what I will try to do to-day.

Now it is quite a popular thing to glorify Love. Indeed, a great many people say, 'Love is the one thing needful. What does it matter what a man believes, or what his habits are as to going to church or chapel, so long as he loves GOD and his brother man?' Well, that seems to me going a good deal too far the other way. It is quite true Love is most precious, but it is not the only precious thing, and there are plenty of texts telling us that the truth is also a most precious thing. Indeed, we must compare Scripture with Scripture, and not build up a one-sided religious system. To take such a passage as this, the opening sentence of the 1st Epistle to Timothy, and to make it the whole of religion, is like showing some one a drawing of one window or one pillar of a church, and saying, 'Now you know what the whole church is like.' If religion has its emotional side, as St. Paul insists when he speaks so strongly of Love, it has no less its intellectual side and its practical side. But I only name this to guard against the mistake of making Love everything.

Well, if Love is not everything, it is a great deal. Sometimes the Bible speaks of love to GOD and sometimes of love to man; and there are terrible high standards of Love given us. To love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart and thy neighbour as thyself is sufficiently high a standard to daunt any one. I can fancy many a plain sensible honest man saying, 'Impossible! No one can reach that height.' Yes, I think it is nearly impossible; but not quite. I have read of holy men and women who have seemed to love GOD with all their hearts. It was not all fancy, was it? They were far too simply good to be hypocrites, and their whole lives were a witness to the love. Not to go to older times, what do you think of that Father Damien who, knowing perfectly well what it meant, went and lived in the Leper Island, ministering to the poor miserable lepers until he in due time took the complaint and died? He was a Roman Catholic priest. Yes; and thank GOD for the example of pure and saintly lives in other Communions than our own. It is very blessed to see what GOD's grace can do, even in the midst of what seems to us error. But I think I have myself known some who have attained to that whole-hearted love, which *we* look at so far off and long to understand. I could easily name men of high promise and bright prospects in this world who

have, for pure love, given up all to live and labour among the poor and outcasts. I knew such in East London. And it was good to know them. I expect to see them far, far above me in the kingdom of glory. Then, again, I knew a widow woman once who was wonderful in her power of devotion, spending regularly as much as five hours a day in prayer and devotional reading, and who, when I was marvelling at a power to me so unknown and inconceivable, exclaimed with a fervour I can never forget, "Oh, how I *do* love God!" But I would ask you to think even of fiction. The finest thing in fiction is the life-like and carefully-drawn picture of a character CHRIST-like in its unselfish love of others. But such a character would not be painted in fiction if it were never real in life. I dare say you will recall some such characters in the best novels you have read. I remember long ago being lost in admiration of the nobly unselfish hero in Miss Mulock's "Head of the Family." Perhaps Dickens' "Little Dorrit" will be more familiar to most. Now one does not feel such characters at all unnatural or impossible. They may be rare. I am afraid they are. But even were they rarer, remember there is *God's ideal* given us. The standard is high, that we all may have something to work up to. 'But after all,' says the sensible man, 'the feelings are so deceptive. A

religion which rests on the feelings is a very unreal thing. I want something practical. Well, you shall have it. I am inclined to think that if there is any truth in the saying that "Love is the fulfilling of the law," you have got something tolerably practical. If we love GOD with all our hearts, we shall certainly do all we can to please and obey Him; and if we love our neighbour as ourselves, we shall certainly never injure or wrong our neighbour. So I do not think any one can rightly complain of love as being unpractical. But do think of this—GOD asks for love. GOD makes love a part, and, as it seems to me, judging from what is said about it in GOD's Word, a large part of religion. And certainly a religion without love would be a terribly dry, cold, dreary sort of thing. *Love is not the basis of heathen religion*

Now, St. Paul tells us there are three sources of love, or states out of which love must flow to be the true and blessed love which GOD asks for.

(1) It must flow out of "a pure heart." There is a sort of love which can flow out of an impure heart. There are plenty of people who talk of love, and profess love, while their heart is full of impurity. That is a mockery of love—a low, mean, sordid, contemptible thing, to be spurned by every right-feeling person. I suppose love to GOD *can* only come "out of a pure heart." An impure soul cannot love

GOD, any more than it can see GOD. You might as well think of having at the same time light and darkness, or cold and heat, as love to GOD and an unclean heart. It is only when speaking of their fellow-creatures that men try to deceive by giving a fair name to a foul thing. O my brothers, keep the fountain of your being pure! If you want a bright, fresh, wholesome stream, don't muddy the spring. A pure heart! Yes, that is a priceless possession. Oh, guard the treasure, for it is easy to lose it, and hard to regain it! "Keep thy heart with all diligence," or, as the margin says, "above all keeping," "for out of it are the issues of life."

(2) Love must also issue out of "a good Conscience." This too is necessary, if love is to be really blessed. Let us try to understand clearly what *Conscience* is. It is the power or faculty within us which tells us when we do right or wrong, approving the right, and condemning the wrong. It has the peculiar quality of being self-acting, not waiting to be appealed to, like Reason, but pronouncing its verdict spontaneously; so that we feel a sense of satisfaction when we have done right, especially after a struggle, and a sense of dissatisfaction when we have yielded to temptation and done wrong. We must not make a mistake and think that Conscience is infallible. We may be very ignorant

*Conscience is Reason and the feeling arising from a known violation of its decree.  
A "good conscience" is enlightened by the Holy Spirit.*

or in much error in our idea of what is right or wrong ; and Conscience can only tell us whether we are acting according to our belief of what is right or wrong, or not. It is very easy to see that this is so. For example, one man's Conscience will bid him join the Church of Rome, another's Conscience will take him to some nonconforming sect ; and Conscience is generally the plea, and often the true plea, for such acts. But both these acts cannot be in themselves right, nor need either of them be right. So Conscience needs to be well instructed, and to be guided by right principles. But it is our best guide. Better to err with Conscience than to go right against Conscience. The conscientious man always does that which he believes to be right. My brothers, live by this rule : when Conscience speaks, obey. It is very easy to neglect the voice of Conscience, and then that voice speaks more and more faintly. There is such a thing as a "seared Conscience." God keep our Conscience tender, and quick to speak, and may it never speak in vain. I am sure this is one secret of happiness in religion. "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." In other words, 'Happy is he that never alloweth himself to do that which his Conscience condemneth.' Now, it is from a heart thus single in aim, thus true in motive, thus simple in obedience, that love will spring.

(3) Once more, Love is the outgrowth of "faith unfeigned." Faith is the power in the soul which makes real the unseen, which lives for another world. It is the *realising faculty*. Oh, how terribly these present things shut out from our souls the things of God !

"The world is too much with us ; late and soon,  
Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers."

So Wordsworth teaches us. And who knows it not by his own experience? We are sad materialists—in practice, if not in theory. It is a grand thing to live in the consciousness of a beyond. This is a life of faith. It is very striking to read in the life of Archbishop Tait, that from quite a young man it was habitual to him to maintain the consciousness of the presence of another world. I have myself known a man who told me that to him it was no difficulty to maintain this consciousness. I think many of us may envy this grace. Yet, surely this faith in the unseen lies at the root of all religion. But it must be "unfeigned," with no pretence. It must be real—no mere words, no mere profession. It must set the soul in the presence of God. Above all, it must make real to the soul the living SAVIOUR. It must be faith in JESUS CHRIST. It must realise Him as the Atonement for sin, as the Example of the perfect Man, as

the living Intercessor. Oh, for more reality ! It is easy to see that this faith is a necessary condition of love. Faith shows us One infinitely lovable, and the sight kindles love. It is impossible to look on Him whose Love "passeth knowledge," and to realise something of that marvellous Love wherewith He has loved us and does love us, and then not to love a little in return. "We love Him because He first loved us." And it is thus that faith "worketh by love." Well may we take up the poor anxious father's cry, "LORD, I believe ; help Thou mine unbelief" !

Oh, Love is a beautiful and gracious flower when it grows out of such soil as we have been contemplating !

O GOD, give us pure hearts, and a good conscience, and faith unfeigned, that we may love Thee more and more, and, loving Thee, may love our brother also ! Amen.



## XVIII

## Prayer and Fasting

"I BROUGHT him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him." So cried the poor heart-broken father. Could the same thing have ever been said of us? A poor sick soul has come to us to open its grief—has come longing for comfort, counsel, deliverance from its burden of guilt. Or sin-laden souls have been in our flock, in the congregation we have so many times addressed, and they have eagerly listened for some word which might throw light on their difficulties, or help them to bear their troubles, or give them a gleam of hope, or nerve them for the battle. Do you think, my brothers, that any such soul might even now look up in misery to JESUS, and say, 'I came to Thy disciples, and they could not cure me'? God forgive us if it be so!

But it was the very thing those disciples of old were chosen, and called, and empowered to do: "Heal the sick, cast out devils." What is the matter that they fail? It was not always so. When the Seventy returned from their first brief

missionary tour, they were able to greet their Master with the joyous tidings, "Even the devils are subject unto us through Thy Name." But now they are like Samson with his locks shorn when the Philistines were upon him. Try to picture the scene. The poor father, who has grown so hopeless, as one by one every remedy has failed, hears of the wonderful cures done by this new Prophet and His little band of disciples, and a fresh gleam of hope lights up in his breast. He inquires, and learns where they are, and he sets out with his poor lunatic son. They profess to cast out devils. He can but try. It is a last chance. They are not all there when he arrives. The Master and three of the most noted of His followers are away. But they are all alike in power; and the father tells them his sad story. If St. Peter had been present, JESUS being absent, we could well imagine that he, as spokesman and leader of the band, would have uttered the word of authority. But no doubt one of them—St. Andrew, or St. Thomas, or St. Jude, perhaps—would stand out, and in a loud commanding voice would address the evil spirit, and say, 'I adjure thee in the name of JESUS CHRIST, come forth.' But there is no response, no change, no cessation of the wild raving. It is just as if Elisha had smitten the Jordan with the mantle of Elijah and it would not part. How staggered, and

frightened, and abashed they must have been! It must have been hard to bear the laughter of the crowd at their impotent endeavours. Their whole credit was at stake—nay, their whole standing and prospects. They were either the disciples of a Master who wielded supernatural powers, and was able to communicate such powers to His servants, or they were the victims of a most tremendous delusion. They stand aghast, while some mock, and some revile, and some look on with sad surprise. It is a sort of turning-point. They are face to face with the question, Is it all true? or can it be all a fable or a dream? But no! Have they not seen it? Have they not done it? Whence, then, this strange loss of power? They shall know.

But see, He comes—the Master, with the three. Why, when they beheld Him, were they so “greatly amazed”? Was it that there was something of unusual dignity or heavenliness about His appearance? Was there some unwonted radiance still shining in His countenance, as of one who had been bathed in the Shekinah of Divine presence? Did He come “trailing clouds of glory” from God, His true home? We know not; but there was something in His appearance which caused wonder as they beheld. And now the father’s hopes light up once more. He steps forward to meet JESUS, and once more

tells his sad tale, with its despairing conclusion, "I brought him to Thy disciples, and they could not cure him." And then follows the stern rebuke—not spoken to the unhappy father, nor to the wondering crowd, but to His own disciples,—"O faithless and perverse generation! How long shall I be with you? How long shall I suffer you?" And we know the end. The fountain of healing is not dried up. The baffled and discomfited disciples behold with awe the Master in His might triumphing over the kingdom of darkness.

But why could not *they* cast out the evil spirit? They come apart to their Master to ask.

And we too have come apart to ask a like question of our Master. Why are *we* so weak? Why all these faults and failures? Why not more sick souls cured, and evil spirits cast out? Why are we so often baffled and defeated? Why not more sinners converted? Why not more souls led to further heights of holiness?

"Because of your unbelief"—this is the first unlocking of the mystery. Their faith had failed. It often did fail. It was not once only that the LORD said to His chosen ones, "O ye of little faith." Oh, comforting thought when we look on our poor, weak, trembling faith! Yes, *their* faith waxed and waned. It was bright one day, and dim another. It flickered and wavered. And

*ours*? Is that so clear, and steadfast, and unshaken? We look within and question ourselves. What do we too often behold? A feeble gleam, now perchance just discernible, and now lost again. Why, we should never have courage to go on, but that Apostles too lacked faith, and the LORD was very merciful to them, and held them up when they would have utterly fainted. He would not quench the smoking flax, but fanned it up into a bright flame, and they won the victory.

But they must get further back still. There is yet a secret inner drawer to be unlocked. Why did their faith fail? There must be some secret cause—something amiss or something lacking—to account for it. Ah, yes! The inner mystery is made known: “Howbeit this kind goeth not forth but by prayer and fasting.” They had neglected these. Perhaps in the eager interest and absorption of their labours for others they had forgotten themselves. Do not *we*, my brothers, know too well what is meant by, “They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept”? Perhaps the disciples had taken labour for prayer. Yes, that old saying “*Laborare est orare*” has its false side as well as its true. Perhaps they said to themselves that much Prayer and much Fasting was impossible in so busy a life as theirs.

But I would take these two words—“Prayer

and Fasting"—as standing for two great principles of the inner life, namely, Devotion and Self-denial. Without these, our LORD would teach us, it is vain to hope to be strong to do the work He sets us to do, or to fight our battle against the forces of the evil one. Let us meditate a little upon these two great sources of spiritual power.

1. *Devotion.* This would include every act which puts us in conscious communion with GOD. We are surrounded with two great worlds—the world of sense and the world of spirit,—in St. Paul's language, "the things which are seen, which are temporal," and "the things which are not seen, which are eternal." Prayer, Devotion, Worship, is the entering into the unseen, the passing within the great veil of the visible, and there communing with the unseen. It is the voice of the soul going forth to GOD. This communing with GOD—this putting the soul consciously in His presence—has many acts, such as Confession, Praise, Prayer in the narrower sense of petition, Meditation. I am not now going to enter into particulars. I would only point out that Prayer, in its wider sense of Devotion or Worship, must include (*a*) stated acts, both in private and in public, both in the secret closet and in the services of GOD's House, and (*b*) the spirit of Prayer. This spirit of

Prayer is no doubt best shown in the habit of Ejaculatory Prayer, the frequent little liftings up of the heart to GOD, showing that we are living in the frame of mind which naturally issues in Prayer. And this is most important in such busy, hurried lives as we clergy have often to live. I often hope that, for those who have little time, and perhaps little power, to pray, the spirit of Prayer, and the habit of often thinking little thoughts of Prayer, may be accepted by a merciful GOD. Indeed, nothing so surely maintains the sense of the presence of the unseen as this practice of Ejaculatory Prayer. And so nothing is a greater help to the winning of that faith which, in its widest and truest sense, is the realisation of the unseen.

2. And now we will turn to Self-denial. In other words, we will turn inwards upon our own souls. For Self-denial means self-discipline, and there can be no self-discipline without self-knowledge. Did you ever think how all religious actions may be classed under the two great divisions of *looking without* and *looking within*? Prayer, of course, belongs mainly to the former, Self-denial to the latter. In the one we are looking away from self to GOD; in the other we are looking down into our own secret hearts and consciences. It is necessary for the healthfulness of the spiritual life to look both without and

within, to flee to GOD in prayer, and to curb, order, and regulate the inner life. Prayer without self-denial is very dangerous and self-deceiving, a mere empty sentimental exercise of a vain imagination. Self-denial without prayer must issue in a morbid asceticism.

But we will think for a moment of our LORD's own word "Fasting." If we may, as I think we may, give to it the wider meaning I have spoken of, yet it has its narrower meaning also. Probably in the passage we are meditating upon our LORD may be using the word in the narrower sense. He may be speaking rather of particular acts of self-discipline than of general self-control or self-conquest. I am afraid, unless we have some rules of specific self-denial, we are very likely to have no self-denial at all. Of course, I do not call abstinence from things positively wrong self-denial. The very essence of self-denial is abstinence from things lawful for the sake of self-discipline and devotion. And assuredly the power to deny self in things lawful is the best security for the power of refusing to yield to things unlawful. It is like the sword-exercise of the soldier, which enables him to wield his weapon effectually in the real warfare.

My brothers, do you ever find yourselves weak and helpless in the contest with evil? Is there ever some evil spirit you would cast out, but



cannot? It may be in yourselves, or it may be in others. Is it some old besetting sin? some clinging habit of indolence, or self-indulgence, or indevoutness? some secret fleshly sin, unchastened thought, an unrestrained imagination? You say you will cast it out. You resolve, you make an effort; but it will not go forth. Again and again it comes back and prevails against you; and then you are afraid, and perhaps you say, 'It is no use trying.' And you despair. Ah, no! "This kind goeth not out but by Prayer and Fasting." What if you went up to some Mount of Transfiguration, and there communed with your LORD, and beheld His glory? What if the flesh were so subdued to the spirit that no vain things of earth could hide from your soul the glories of the Infinite? Might you not then be stronger to do battle with the lusts of darkness? You do want to live holier lives. Do you not think your failure to do so may sometimes be easy enough to account for? Your prayers? Your life? Might it not be well to search for the cause of failure there?

But there is a way in which the story may teach us a very different—almost an opposite—lesson, namely, that of our own impotence apart from CHRIST. "Without Me ye can do nothing." Aye, even with all the Prayer and Fasting we

can give, the evil spirit will not really depart *till He comes*. It is His power, His Name, His authority, which alone can prevail. "I can of mine own self do nothing." But "I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me."

## XIX

### Fasting

(*Specially for Lent*)

Joel ii. 12 : "Turn ye even unto Me, with all your heart, and with *fasting*."—*Epistle for Ash-Wednesday*.

St. Matt. vi. 16 : "When ye *fast*."—*Gospel*.

I SUPPOSE that it is not an uncommon feeling that Fasting is an Old Testament ordinance, somewhat inconsistent with the freedom and spirituality of the Gospel. Quite true, there is very little direct enforcement of Fasting in the New Testament. Compared with Almsgiving and Prayer, very little is said about it. Yet our LORD classes it in the Sermon on the Mount with Almsgiving and Prayer, giving similar warnings against formal, external, ostentatious observance. Evidently He assumes it as an acknowledged practice, and instead of saying, 'This is a slavish ceremonial adjunct of the Old Covenant, which you may now abandon in the liberty of the Gospel,' He simply gives a caution against its abuse. I feel

it a temptation myself, and think it is a temptation to many, to dwell on the freer, more joyous, more hopeful aspects of Christianity. The sunshine of religion is very dear. We love to dwell on all that can cheer and encourage. It is a tendency of the age, no doubt, to somewhat ignore the sterner and darker side of religion. It is a reaction from the dreadful teachings of a cold, bitter ultra-Calvinism. Perhaps now there is a danger of going too far, and forgetting that there is a sterner, darker side. We may be a little tempted to ignore the Bible teachings as to "the wrath of God" which "is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men." Faber said, "I see light everywhere: I have no eye for darkness." Yet the Master spoke very plainly about the taking up of the cross to follow Him, and, with all their joy and peace in believing, His disciples do not certainly represent religion as all sunshine. St. Paul at any rate (as we see in the Epistle for the first Sunday in Lent) approved himself as a minister of CHRIST "in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labours, in watchings, in fastings." I suppose this list represents *involuntary* trials and troubles; but he certainly not only bore, but welcomed, these for their discipline of self-sacrifice. There is a hard, rough side to religion: there *are* such

things as stern dealings with the fallen nature, resolute repressions of the natural man. Well, it is a loving FATHER Who has laid this cross on the world, Who has cast this great strange shadow all across the sunlit plain, and He does it in love; so that a saint could cry, "Nulla crux quanta crux!"

Now about this Fasting. It tells us of a rebellious flesh to be subdued. Well, we do not want the Bible to tell us that, do we? Which of us will say the flesh is so subdued to the spirit that there is no need of any further discipline or restraint? O my brothers! what shall we say of this love of ease, this petty self-indulgence, this self-pleasing, self-seeking, self-will; this yielding to indolence, sloth, ill-temper; this acceptance of a low worldly standard; this forgetfulness of the lofty aim, the high ideal, of the Christian ministry; this moral cowardice? Shall I speak of even sadder things—of unrestrainedness of thought and imagination, of unguardedness of eye, of some shadowy form or phantom of sensual sin skulking in the farthest and darkest corner of the heart? Oh! how we should welcome anything, everything, which can help to subdue, and trample down, and put to death the evil within us! And this is one main end of Fasting. Of course, it is also for setting the spirit free for devotion, that the "corruptible body" may the less "press down"

the spirit. But to-day I am speaking of self-discipline. Fasting, in the narrower, restricted sense of abstinence in indulgence of the appetite, in the quantity or quality of food, is a very elementary form of self-discipline. It touches the rudest, least spiritual side of our being; it deals with the fleshly, material part of our nature. Well, when we are so spiritual that the bodily affections touch and move us no more, we can do without fasting. I do not know what *you* feel; I feel very like a beginner, a mere child, in spiritual things. I am afraid we have not done with the "poor elements" yet. I hope we realise higher things too; yet there is much very elementary about us all. I like to think of the words of Ignatius on his way to Rome, in his old age, to be exposed to wild beasts in the Colisseum: "Νῦν ἀρχομαι μαθήτης εἶναι." I am sure some little rule of abstinence at such a season as this is good for one. It does teach one self-discipline, and it is a reminder day by day of the meaning and purpose of the observance of the season. Our Church lays down no rules of detail; it leaves that to each conscience. Rules of detail are apt to become very formal and superficial, and can be turned into instruments of indulgence, instead of self-denial. Yet, on the other hand, where details are ignored or despised, general rules become so sublimated and ethereal that they

practically melt into nothingness. It is easy to make Fasting of wider application than to the question of mere food or drink. There are plenty of ways of minor self-denials, if we look for them—earlier rising, that there may be time for extra devotion; the putting away of all light literature; the avoidance of all mere pleasurable engagements; the adding of special acts of penitence and confession to our evening prayers; the undertaking of some new task which may require effort, or be somewhat unwelcome: these are some of the ways which are obvious enough. I suppose that most of us at least add to our church services, and keep the season as a time of quiet and retirement. But oh! how dreadful if these things are done as good and meritorious in themselves, instead of as helps to the inner life! And how hateful if these things are accompanied by any faintest tinge of Pharisaic pride or sanctimoniousness! I think these petty self-denials may be compared to the sword-exercise of the soldier in camp: if he has never practised it beforehand, he will find it hard to wield the sword to any effect in real battle. So self-discipline, self-denial, self-conquest, in minor things, voluntarily imposed, will give power to choose for God, and will repulse the claims of self, in the hour when some great choice has to be made, or when some great temptation assails. But if

valued for themselves, if made the subject of pride or self-complacency, if done to be seen of men, then they surely deserve God's indignant denunciation. I think He would say, "Is it such a fast that I have chosen—a day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD?" You will remember how the prophet continues, bidding the people hallow their fast by works of mercy and charity. Yes, even if we take a high and true view of self-discipline, and really use it to grow in holiness and devotion, and to follow a little more closely in the steps of Him Who bore the Cross for us, yet it never wins its truest and best blessedness unless hallowed by acts of loving-kindness to others.

We are to run the race "looking unto JESUS." But as we look we behold One "despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief," and lo! as He goes on before, He carries a cruel heavy Cross for us. And if we will listen, we may hear Him speak, and catch the old, well-known, but not always well-loved words, "If any man will be My disciple, let him take up his cross and follow Me."



## XX

### “The Marks of the Lord Jesus”

*(Epistle for Fifteenth Sunday after Trinity)*

No doubt, in the literal sense these were marks of suffering, the gall-marks of the fetters and stocks, the wales of his five scourgings, the scars of his three rod-beatings, the deformities left by the all but fatal stoning of Lystra. And he gloried in them. “I bear,” that is, ‘I carry about,’ ‘I wear,’ these “marks” as badges. They are my pride and joy, the insignia of victory. They tell “Whose I am and Whom I serve.” I am a slave, branded with the Master’s mark. Aye; but such a Master, that to be His slave is better than to reign as a king.

Well, some may “bear the marks” even now, literally. Is there one, sick, worn, saddened, with long, weary warfare, who has fought on when he has needed rest, spending and being spent, till his constitution is undermined, his vital powers exhausted, his health ruined—worn out in his Master’s service? I know such would not like

to say it, yet we may say it of him, "He bears in his body the marks of the LORD JESUS."

But there is something better—higher—more blessed than this. You want to know whether a man belongs to JESUS. What do you look for? Not for bodily marks. It is given to very, very few to bear such. There is something which tells better than these. You can see that such an one is a good man, you say. You can tell that so-and-so is a true Christian. How do you see? How can you tell? Ah! there are many marks and signs. Shall we think of some? They are the marks *He* bore. The *bodily* marks were; for He bore—He bears—the stigmata. "The plowers plowed upon His back, and made long furrows." "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities." He showed in His risen Body the marks of the nails and the spear. And so it is in the *spiritual* marks. They proclaim the bearer His, for He bore them too. It is in likeness to Him that we may bear His marks.

It is true the marks we are now thinking of are spiritual. Yet it is no less true that they are borne in the body; for the body reflects the spirit. It is impossible to have a CHRIST-like spirit in an un-CHRIST-like body. We do not find a pure, meek, guileless soul hiding beneath a sensual, haughty, or cunning look. However

great hypocrites we are, faces are more or less transparent. So we do look for a CHRIST-like aspect. The light will not be quite hidden; if it be there, it will shine through. “We all with open face beholding as in a glass”—‘reflecting as a mirror,’ more literally—“the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD.”

But the marks.

I. PRAYER. I would put this first as the root and ground of all. Likeness to CHRIST must be won upon our knees. Not only must it be won in answer to prayer, but also in the very exercise of prayer. Those nights of prayer! That wondrous intercession! Those heavenly communings with His FATHER! And He so spotless, so untouched by earthly soil or stain! Nay, can He, Who even here was “in the bosom of the FATHER,” Who could say, “I and My FATHER are one”—can He need the outpouring of vocal prayer? Can He need withdrawal from scenes of daily toil to realise the presence of the FATHER? Can He, Whose life was permeated with the Divine, a very interblending of heaven and earth—can He need, as we poor sinners need, place, posture, words, by which to commune with GOD? Well, perhaps it was for our sakes. Yet not alone so. And then *we*. Oh! needing

prayer as He could not need it! What are our prayers? Do we bear in our body "the marks" by a life of devotion? Is there any copying of the pattern in this? Is there any deep, earnest communing with GOD? Is there any telling of all that is in our hearts? Is there any carrying to Him of all our trials, troubles, cares, interests? Is there any fervent intercession? any earnest pleading for others? for our parishes? for separate members of our flock? for the sick? the afflicted? the sinful? the struggling? Surely our pastoral visits should give us enough to pray about, not to speak of our own needs. Oh! to be like JESUS in prayer. Then we should be more like Him in all things.

II. MEEKNESS. "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." This is a grace despised by the world, honoured of heaven. See Him insulted, mocked, struck, spitted upon. He suffered, "leaving us an example that we should follow His steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth: Who when He was reviled, reviled not again; when He suffered, He threatened not; but committed Himself to Him that judgeth righteously." "He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth." And then we cannot

bear a little slight! Some one thoughtlessly says or does something we dislike, and straightway we lose our temper! Our plans are thwarted, and we are cross! We are not made enough of, and we are offended! Where are “the marks”? Meekness, lowliness, gentleness, humility—are they so visible? And we are not only the servants of CHRIST, but His ministers, whose very calling is to preach and teach Him. How can we teach Him with our lips while we contradict the lesson with our lives? O GOD! forgive our sinful pride, and make us to bear “the marks” in a meek and lowly spirit.

III. LOVE. JESUS is Love, because He is GOD, and “GOD is Love.” He proved His Love; for “greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.” But look at His Love in His daily life and acting.

(1) It was *patient* Love. Think of it in His dealings with Nicodemus; with His very “brethren,” who were so slow in believing; with His chosen Apostles, who so often failed. And we are so soon weary; so easily content in our feeble efforts with some poor soul.

(2) It was *pitying* Love. See Him with the sick, the lame, the blind, the deaf and dumb, the sad, with the widow of Nain, with Jairus, in the hour of sorrow. Well, we go to visit our people in their troubles. At least the faithful

pastor goes. Is it never for a perfunctory visit? Is the heart full of pitying love, longing to soothe, help, brighten, comfort? Perhaps the sick are sometimes cold, hard, ignorant, uninteresting. Well, they are all the more to be pitied.

(3) It was *tender* Love. Was it not with tender love that He loved Martha and Mary and Lazarus? How beautiful, how gracious, was His love for him who was permitted to style himself "the disciple whom JESUS loved"! And how gentle and true and loyal was the love He bore to His own blessed Mother!

(4) It was *forgiving* Love. Oh! how wonderfully was His forgiving love shown to the disciple who denied Him thrice! Was not the fall very terrible? Think of the height from which it was. Think of the high privileges, the confident professions, the once dauntless faith, the close intimacy;—and then the depth to which it reached: not alone the sudden terror of the startling question, not alone the cowardice of an unguarded moment; but the persistence, the aggravation of continued falsehood, the cursing and swearing. Could you or I deal so gently and mercifully with such a wrong? Do we never cherish resentment, hard thoughts, unmerciful tempers, when some petty injustice (as we think) has been done to us?

(5) It was *generous* Love. All giving, and

no receiving; a mighty yearning to bless. There was that rich young man whom the LORD beheld, *earnestly regarded* (as the word implied), and loved. He does not seem to us to have deserved that love; yet it was given him. We look on many a one, capable of better things, sometimes inquiring, longing, half-trying to do better, yet sadly disappointing in the moment of trial, choosing the world and not CHRIST. Do we regard such an one with love? Do we ever say to ourselves, ‘Oh, to win that soul for JESUS!’

(6) It was *disappointed* Love. It was the love that was rejected at Nazareth, that wept over Jerusalem, that men would not receive, but that still loved on. And now, too, men will not listen, will not believe, will not repent, and it hardens us and sours us. As if we deserved to be better received than our Master! But where is the love that weeps for sorrow at the sight of sin?—that can echo the Psalmist’s words, “Mine eyes gush out with water because men keep not Thy law”?—that can be repulsed and yet love on?

IV. SELF-SACRIFICE. Perhaps this is the clearest, truest mark of all. He “loved me, and gave Himself for me”—is not this love’s crown and summit? Is not this the spring and source of all true love in us? “We love Him because He first loved us.” And, loving Him, we be-

come like Him. And then, if we are like Him, we too shall surely bear the mark of self-sacrifice. He "pleased not Himself." His whole Life, no less than His Death, was one long self-sacrifice. He lived for others, as He died for others. And then we turn to our own lives. Alas! alas! What shall we say? Dare you—dare I—lay this life of ours down side by side with His and look at the two together? Oh, how it shames one! This love of ease! This self-indulgence! This shrinking from toil and discomfort! This choosing of smoother paths! This taking up of work which we like, and leaving work which GOD has set before us, but which we do not like! How opposite all this to His Life! The marks—the marks of the LORD JESUS? Oh, can you find them? Can I?

Now we will kneel in silence and examine ourselves. Do let us be honest and truthful. We will search well in the light of GOD's presence. The GOD of truth is shining down on our souls, our lives, our characters. And as we gaze upon what that light reveals, we will ask ourselves, Where, in all this that I look upon, are "the marks of the LORD JESUS"?



## XXI

### Despondency

You will all remember the description of Elijah's despondency as given in 1 Kings xix: "He requested for himself that he might die." He was brought very low. Yet it would seem to have been not long after the marvellous triumph of truth and right told in the chapter before—God's glorious vindication of Himself and His prophet on Carmel. Then at the end of the same chapter is the fulfilment of the prophecy of abundance of rain, on which St. James throws so much light (v. 17, 18), teaching us that it was in answer to the prophet's prayer. Instead of putting his face between his knees, and praying that he might die, he ought surely to have been full of holy exultation and triumph. Yet he was full of despair. "He requested for himself that he might die." Why? Because all seemed in vain. He had had visions of a grand reform, of a national repentance. Where were they? Where were the fruits of the stupendous miracle? Surely he might have looked to see the whole nation in

sackcloth and ashes; the King, who witnessed the miracle, smitten with compunction, like Nebuchadnezzar after the fiery furnace; Queen Jezebel, if not bettered, at least ashamed to set her face against a GOD so great, or to defend Baal's prophets any more. Alas! no. If we could do a like miracle now, we should not be wise to expect great fruits. *A miracle never converted a hardened heart.* Look at the raising of Lazarus—the healing of the man blind from his birth. “If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.” It is the same with great judgments as with miracles. You would think some shocking event—the sudden death of a drunkard or the like—would touch the consciences of all; yet we see every day how easy it is to resist. So was it with Jezebel and the idolatrous nation. Instead of signs of penitence, there were threats of vengeance (1 Kings xix. 2). If *that* scene on Mount Carmel would not turn them, what would? No wonder Elijah despaired. Other holy men have known it: Jeremiah, when the great revival under Josiah came to nought; David, when he saw the ungodly in great prosperity, and when he wrote the 77th Psalm; nay, even JESUS, when He wept over Jerusalem. It is no such strange sight to see mercies despised, judgments rebelled against.

Like times come to us. We too are subject to great disappointments.

Sometimes it is in the Church at large. Some of us older ones can remember the bright hopes we entertained, the glorious foreshadowings of a splendid revival which we thought we discerned. We thought our dear Church about to become "a city at unity in itself," the reconciler of the shattered Churches, the peacemaker of the earth, the glory of all lands. Then came miserable wranglings, and sacred mysteries were made the arena of unholy dispute; and the folly of ignorance, and the rashness of haste, and the scandals of bad men, made the heart sick. And then came the desertion of the Church by men revered and trusted. All seemed hopeless confusion and instability. And then the misery of prosecution, and the mistakes of well-meaning men, and oh, so much to make us afraid and ashamed! And then in our parishes—there are times when a clergyman takes a very gloomy view. He has laboured, and all seems in vain. He has preached, and few heed. He has looked for fruit, and lo! there is none. Worse still: there are some we had hoped well of, and they fell away, or proved by their conduct that their religion was all outside. Communicants have brought scandal on the Church. The choir have shown themselves unworthy of their position.

Ah! then the clergyman goes home, and sits down and says, 'All in vain. Whom can I trust? Are any true to GOD, or are all alike?' He is ready to give up all. "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I am not better than my fathers."

I suppose most of us know such feelings—the sense of failure, of loneliness, of hopelessness. Our parishes get no better. Drunkenness, immorality, blasphemy, indifference, abound as ever. We have done nothing. Well, I know it is as nothing. Yet GOD had His answer for Elijah. It is the history of all this nineteenth chapter.

1. Mark how GOD strengthened the prophet with angels' food. And shall not *we* look to Heaven for strength to bear our disappointments? Is no food provided for us? Nay, we will go first thing to GOD's altar, and there cast down our burden, and ask Him for strength to take it up anew, if it is His will.

2. It was not taken away at once. No: Elijah had to go forty days fasting to Horeb—forty dreary, desolate days. But with heavenly food we can do and bear much. But then came the marvel. GOD would reveal Himself to His servant. He waited in anxious, trembling expectation. The wind—the earthquake—the fire! Lo! there pass by these mighty powers, wielded by GOD. But there was no revelation of GOD

yet. Ah! if GOD had only come in these, as on Mount Carmel! If only the fire had fallen, and smitten His enemies with the blasting of the breath of His displeasure! If—we too might say—if GOD would only work in some mighty manifestation of His power! If only He would send His HOLY SPIRIT like the mighty wind to bow the uplifted pride of man! If only He would break the hard, stony hearts as the rocks were broken by the earthquake! If only He would melt the icy coldness of men, as the fire might melt the snows on Horeb! But no! GOD made not Himself known to Elijah in these signs and wonders; it was only in the “still small voice.” I suppose it was a very calm, quiet utterance; there was nothing to startle, to alarm, to astonish. And can *this* be GOD’s Voice? Ah yes! and it is still the way of His utterance. Conscience whispers; or the simple reading of GOD’s written Word falls on the ear. It is homely, commonplace, unexciting. Can *this* be GOD’s Voice? If He spoke in thunder, we would listen; but this “still small voice”? Do we always recognise it when it speaks?

Well, it came; and the prophet knew it. I think he was one who was always listening for GOD’s Voice. And to the listener it shall speak. He knew it, and in reverent awe “he wrapped his face in his mantle.”

“What doest thou here, Elijah?” A noteworthy question. Why had he come? What was his object? What were his thoughts, feelings, purposes? He was GOD’s prophet. Was he doing GOD’s work? Where was his faith? Had he not distrusted GOD?

Then he answers. It is the voice of his despair. A second time he utters his complaint: “I have been very jealous for the LORD GOD of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” And GOD bears with him. There is no stern rebuke, no rejection from His service. He has erred, but not sinfully. And GOD gives him a double answer. (i.) Work. Go and *do*. He has a new mission for him, and one of vast importance. (ii.) Comfort. “Yet I have left Me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees that have not bowed the knee unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” These two things are exactly what *we* want. Ah, my brothers, you have wept over your failure, you have desponded as you have looked at your work; it has all seemed so poor, so faulty, so unworthy. Nay, GOD has work yet for you to do. Blessed are they who see some work before their feet. Listen; an Angel seems to speak to thee: ‘Stay not to

mourn, and fret, and call up pictures of woe. There is a call to labour. GOD points the way. Go, work, and leave results to Him.'

And things are not so bad, after all, as they seem. GOD has His hidden saints. "The LORD knoweth them that are His." Oh, blessed thought! If some disappoint us, and cast us down, still many remain faithful. The hidden saints will one day be known. We think we stand alone on the LORD's side (and oh, such poor champions and prophets too!); but in *the Day* perchance we may learn that, just when we seemed most alone, GOD had His seven thousand—His hidden number of simple, lowly believers, making no show, unmarked of men, yet "reserved by the power of GOD through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."

## XXII

### Courage

*(Epistle for St. Matthew's Day)*

2 Cor. iv. 1 : "We faint not."

COURAGE is a most blessed, helpful thing. It is born of quiet but steadfast trust in GOD.

By courage I do not mean so much boldness in action as resoluteness in endurance. I would speak of that calm, unflinching, untiring willingness—nay, readiness—to persevere, which is the opposite to the "fainting" of the Epistle. St. Paul was not downcast or disheartened. He had a good deal to make him so. Things did not always go well or smoothly. His missionary tours were no triumphant progresses. Antioch in Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, in the first journey; Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, in the second, had their stories of failure, and disappointment, and distress. I could quite fancy one of an impulsive, eager temperament, but unsustained by the strength of an assured faith, would have been utterly daunted. 'I have done



my best,' he might say—'braved perils on all sides, flinched not from speaking my message among the mockers and gainsayers; and I have failed. They hunt me from city to city. They will not receive the truth. I can do no more.'

My brothers, is it never so with us? We have perhaps begun our ministry hopefully, with many thoughts of courage and many dreams of success. Perhaps at first some listened. We thought, with improved services, attention to the singing, earnest preaching, setting forth the Church in her great mission to the people, we were about to accomplish much. Then, after a time, things seemed to stand still. Then there was a falling off. For some reason or other, the services did not attract, nor the sermons hold, the flock. Then came days of discouragement; and that made matters worse. No really good and happy work is done by a disheartened worker. We want life, spring, energy, in our work, and these are lacking in the disheartened. We may be almost unconscious of the change, but, as our hopes lower, we are less and less able to inspire hope. It is the brave and hopeful who alone can encourage; and our people need encouragement. If our spirits fail, we have lost half our power. Perhaps we cannot put our finger on the fault in our work, or in our system, or in our diligence, to account for our failure; but most

likely there was such. It may have been (I only mention the commonest cause) a want of sympathy with our people; not understanding their feelings, thoughts, wishes, wants; a lack of power to put ourselves in their place and see as they do; a class difference which we have not learned how to bridge over. Well, anyhow, the trial has come, and the discouragement. We cannot say, "We faint not."

Oh! had we only a simple, childlike trust in GOD! That would help so much. "I should utterly have fainted, but that I believe verily to see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." Yes, a sure trust in GOD's strength, GOD's purpose, GOD's love, would keep us often from fainting. If we could only say, 'I believe GOD has set me this work to do; I believe He wills to help souls by me; I believe He will not let me wholly fail if I am faithful; I believe these poor souls are meant for heaven; I know CHRIST died for them; I know GOD loves them; I believe He would make His love for them known through me; I will labour on, and even if it be but to tell one single soul the glad tidings, I will persevere and faint not.' I am sure a *hopeful* ministry is a *helpful* ministry. I believe in "the GOD of hope."

But St. Paul gives a special reason for not fainting. "Seeing we have this ministry, as we

have received mercy, we faint not." He grounds his courage partly on the nature of the ministry, partly on his personal experience of God's goodness.

What is there about the ministry to inspire confidence and save from disheartenment? He has said a great deal in the chapter before as to it, exalting it in its excellency above what the Old Covenant could offer. He glorifies its spirituality. It is no ministration of a dry, hard, formal letter of the law, but of a pure, free, blessed heavenly spirit. In all his teaching and ministering he had to do with great inner realities, not with mere outward formalities. It was this—the realisation of the majesty of the Unseen—with which all his ministry had to do, and which gave such grandeur to it. Ah yes! our ministry, if we have any worthy conception of it, is full of life and power, because it is full of God. It deals with the things of heaven. It has larger, freer, truer subjects to treat and dispense than are known to him who looks only on the things which are seen. It is a ministry of faith. If it be not this, it is nothing. Then again, it is glorious in its freedom and fulness of blessing. To the seeing eye it is resplendent with Divine light. It has no veil, like that of Moses, but is an *unveiling* of God's purposes, and love, and goodness. Alas! for how many

is the veil still "upon their heart." They cannot see the brightness, or the beauty, or the love. But how grandly does the Apostle vindicate the freedom and heavenliness of his ministry in those magnificent words in which he concludes the third chapter: "But we all"—(I quote from the Revised Version, as giving the sense far more exactly)—"we all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the LORD, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the LORD the Spirit." It is indeed a gracious and heavenly thing we are dealing with. It lifts one from earth; it sets one face to face with the LORD Who died for us; it shines upon us with the light of His glory; it fills us with that light till we too are light in the LORD; it draws us into blessed resemblance to Him; it deepens evermore in advancing waves of blessedness our union and our glory. No wonder the writer faints not! Who could faint with such a splendid hope and promise? No wonder, having such a hope, he uses great plainness of speech. Surely we must long from our very soul to utter so that all can understand the wondrous excellencies of our theme. It is too beautiful to be hidden in a cloud of misty words; it is too glorious to be set where none can see its splendours; it is too free to be trammelled and hampered by man's narrow conditions. It is a

ministration of heavenly things; of unveiled glory; of the very presence of, and union with, our glorified Redeemer. Therefore "we faint not."

Aye, but the personal point remains: "As we have received mercy." Well, do we hesitate and question? Do we doubt about our souls' blessedness? Nay, my brothers, do not let us expose ourselves to the taunt, "Physician, heal thyself." Surely, surely the spring and motive power of our ministry must lie in the secret consciousness of its blessedness, in the personal knowledge of the richness of its gifts to the soul. O GOD, forgive us if we have been trying to tell others of blessings we have shut out from ourselves; if we have been pointing to the fountain, but never drank of its life-giving stream; if we have spoken of GOD, but never known GOD! No wonder, then, our words are poor and cold, our ministrations dull and wearisome. Why, we have been acting a part, deceiving or trying to deceive ourselves and others. Oh, what wretched, hollow, unreal work it has been! Of course we faint, and are disheartened. What else could we expect? He who has never realised the absolving power of pardoning grace is little able to win others to seek its blessedness. He who knows not the power of the HOLY SPIRIT in the subduing of sin and resistance of temptation is

little likely to teach others to fight their battle more bravely and to lean on the strength which is from God. It *may* be, if our work seems fruitless and our ministry a failure—it *may* be we have really to go back to our own inner life, our own souls' experience, for the true cause.

O GOD, we are Thy ambassadors: we are ever bearing to men Thy messages of mercy! But we are poor sinners ourselves, needing first of all the mercy we proclaim. Oh, be merciful to us, O LORD, that we may know the riches of Thy loving-kindness, and may speak to others that which we know! Thou hast entrusted us with a glorious ministry. Thou hast been very gracious to our own poor sinful souls. "Therefore, seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we faint not."

## XXIII

### Jesus seeing our Toils

“HE saw them toiling in rowing.” Where was He? and where were they? The weary day was at last over. The Apostles had, perhaps the day before, returned from their first brief mission. They “told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.” Then, knowing their need of rest and refreshment of spirit, He had said to them, “Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest awhile.” Indeed it was needful for them—for Him too, Who, as Man, submitted to all human weakness; “for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.” Blessed rest and communing! Happy Retreat, if it might have been! But rest and leisure were not to be then. We know the story—how the multitudes thronged on foot round the northern end of the lake; how when He “came out” (of the ship probably) and “saw much people, He was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd; and He began

to teach them many things." And then the wonderful miracle, told in all four Gospels—a miracle indeed, yet surely also a parable—full of deep, mysterious teaching about the Bread of Life. What a day that was—a long, and hard, and weary day! They came apart for rest; but it was all labour! You know too how much harder it is to bestow all loving attention on others when one's own heart is bleeding with sorrow. His was. He had just heard of the cruel martyrdom of His cousin, St. John the Baptist. But there was no thought of self. It was just as if He had come on purpose to minister to all those poor fainting souls. He must have been quite worn out. And now it is time to go. He first sends His disciples away. He constrains them "to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side." We are not told why. Probably it was in view of the coming miracle. Anyhow, they must forego rest and retirement at present: it is not to be now. They must cross the sea and leave Him. And now at last *He* retires, but not to rest. See, He slowly climbs the bleak, wild mountain. It is dark, save perhaps for the young Paschal moon, and rough and stormy. We follow, and gaze in silent wondering awe. He is there on the lonely mountain, in the dark. Hour after hour passes. It is cold; it must be so on a stormy night in early spring. It is



Passover time. The next year, you will remember, the soldiers had lit a fire. There, in that cold, rough night, is JESUS alone—not resting—no; but wrestling all night in prayer. Even now He is beginning His great work as Intercessor. His prayers are not for Himself. The Prince of darkness, who departed from Him baffled “for a season,” has not yet renewed the deadly conflict. It is not yet Gethsemane. His prayers are not for self, we may be sure. And does He forget His disciples, sent away in the boat as the night fell?

But where are they? Miles away. They have rowed between three and four miles. They are in the midst of the sea, tossed with the waves. It is very near dawn now; the fourth watch is beginning. They started in the evening, but have only gone twenty-five or thirty furlongs! The wind is contrary. No doubt they are in seeming peril. Once before on that lake they had been so; but then they had Him in the boat with them. Perhaps now they say, ‘If only He had come with us!’

Well, there is He on the mountain. There are they on the sea, miles away in the darkness. But “*He saw them*”—“*saw them* toiling in rowing.” Oh! words full of comfort, and hope, and refreshment! So little did they think His Eye was on them, that they did not know Him

when He came. Yet while praying on the mountain "He *saw* them."

And now—yes, is He not still praying on the mountain? He has gone up on high. He is on the mountain alone, for there is no other mediator by the side of Him. He is veiled from sight, yet "He ever liveth to make intercession."

"Thy years, O God, can never fail,  
Nor Thy blest work within the veil."

And yet again, is He not still beholding the toils of His disciples? Is not that all-seeing, all-pitying Eye bent ever on the struggles of His people? Is it ever with us as it was with those in the boat? Is the sky ever dark, and the wind contrary, while we seem to toil in vain and to make no progress? Does JESUS seem far off? I think so. That passage of the sea is like the voyage of life. Has it never been said by any of us, 'I make no progress. Visions of a holy life come to me sometimes, and then the old temptations, the old dulness, and coldness, and idleness, and unspirituality, and indevotion, and listlessness come back again. I strive a little now and then; I toil in rowing for a short time; and then I fall back. It is all in vain. I shall never gain the shore of peace, never win the victory, never escape the buffetings of wind and

wave.' Perhaps not, brother. Yet *He sees thee* toiling in rowing.

Or a time of special struggle comes. There is a crisis of life to be passed through. The spirit is moved to some decisive step from which there is no going back. Some labour is shown us to be undertaken for the LORD, some great sacrifice to be made, some heavy cross to be taken up. It seems too hard. We shrink from it. The waves threaten, and we cry, 'Would that He were more plainly nigh!' Yet *He sees us* toiling in rowing.

Or we are, as we by our calling are bound to be, toiling for others, spending and being spent. We devise many plans of usefulness, multiply services, devote time to diligent visiting, preach earnestly, withhold not reproofs, rebukes, exhortations, where needed. Yet it seems to be labour in vain. Our flocks heed not. They appear ungrateful, disappointing. They get no better, but worse. We take a dark view of all our toil, and are tempted to throw up our oars and let the wind carry us where it will. Yet *He sees us* toiling in rowing.

Now let us think again of the disciples on the sea.

I. JESUS *sent* them there. He "constrained" them. It was *His* doing, not theirs. So, when trials and difficulties beset us, and all is very dark

around, let us remember, 'He has sent me these.' It will be a thought of strength. Only let us make sure of one thing—that our course is His will—that there is no self-pleasing, no self-chosen path of life—that we are rowing where He has sent us—and then there need be no fear. He Who "constrained" us cannot mean it for our hurt.

2. JESUS left them in their trouble all night. He is not with them now, even asleep. He tries them by His absence—not *real* absence, only *seeming* absence. Oh! those weary hours of toil! Why does He leave them for so long? Is it not cruel, when He could still the storm at His word? Ah! *we* know the end. *They* did not. Yet it was coming. And they needed the lesson. They were too ready (like Mary Magdalene in the Garden) to lean on His visible, tangible presence. They must learn to know that He is with them always.

3. JESUS saw them toiling in their rowing all the while, and prayed on. Happy toilers, had they known! What matter winds, and waves, and toil, and failure, while *He* sees and prays? O brothers, we are often weary with toil, weary with long battling with the waves of sin and the winds of temptation in ourselves. We are often weary with long and seemingly fruitless toils for others. We could at times almost give up. Oh no! that may not be. What! give up when

JESUS sees and prays? "O ye of little faith, wherefore will ye doubt?"

4. But He is near; He is coming closer and closer. It is the fourth watch. "The night is far spent; the day is at hand." O brother toilers, lift up your eyes; peer through the darkness. Is it only some mocking storm-engendered wreathing of mist and spray? Nay, it grows upon the straining sight. Surely some dim, mystic Form approaches. Even now perchance—here, in this time of Retreat—we have been toiling in prayer, wrestling with the winds and waves that seemed sent to buffet us even on our knees. It has been dark when we cried for light; rough and toilsome when we hoped for peace. We have longed for JESUS to manifest His presence. He may have seemed to deny our prayer—to leave us alone to battle on as best we can, uncheered by any special revelation of His presence. We may have felt the strain of long-continued devotion, and have cried, 'I shall never win the shore!' Yet a sense of sin has fallen on us like a mighty shadow, and has made us afraid. Our utter weakness, worthlessness, unspirituality, slavery to some besetting sin, has stood before us like a dim, dreadful shape in the darkness. Listen, O brother. Perhaps through all that heaving and rushing of dark, stormy thoughts a Voice may come, still and small, yet clear on the listening

ear, "It is I; be not afraid." Or a deep and new resolve has been seething in the soul. There may have been a vision of truer work to be wrought for CHRIST; of deeper self-sacrifices to be made; of a cross that might be taken up daily; of an act, or a course of action, which would commit us to a deeper spirituality of living, it may be to a greater separation from the world, to some abandonment of old ways, habits, indulgences, to the adoption of new rules of personal discipline or devotion to the souls of our flock. It has hung dim and undefined before the soul in hours of wrestling with the Angel of GOD. It comes out, even now, in a clearer shape. We see not WHO is there in that strange, mystic shape. Yet when we behold the cross, I think the Crucified is never far off. And close behind the vision of a nearer approach to the Divine Pattern, lo! *He* may be there, folded in dark mist, yet smiling with tenderest love as He sees our fear, and again the Voice may be heard, "It is I; be not afraid."

5. Shall we willingly receive Him into the ship—whatever the consequences? If He will not come without bringing that cross with Him? If He will not come without saying, 'Now, My son, I claim your whole heart and life and powers. Now I give you one great choice—the world, ease, popularity, a smooth course, a pleasant life; or toil, trouble, self-sacrifice, devotion, rebuke and

dislike, misunderstanding, and perchance persecution: choose this day. If the former, I pass by; if the latter, I stay'? Shall we willingly receive Him into the ship—whatever the consequences? Oh yes! JESUS, Master, abide with us. We will not let Thee go. Thou shalt not pass us by. Come to us, and bring what Thou wilt. Welcome toil, welcome trouble, welcome the cross, if only Thou art with us. Can you—can I—really say this?

6. Then the end. "Immediately the ship was at the land whither they went." This was a miracle; but, like all miracles, a parable too. You look on your fruitless labour, your long, weary strivings with sin—your own sins and others' sins—and cry, 'So much toil, and so little gained! Such fighting and struggling, and the sea but half crossed and the land far away out of sight!' Ah! but are you toiling in the course JESUS has marked out for you? and are you toiling in earnest? I know it will be feebly, unsatisfactorily, perhaps to all outward seeming in vain; but are you bending to the oar, keeping the head of the boat in the right direction? Then any day (does it matter so much when?) He may come, dimly, mysteriously, walking on the waves. And what if, when He comes, you find that immediately you are at the land whither you go? Amen. "Even so, come, LORD JESUS."

## XXIV

### The Transfiguration

*Peter & James & John*

WE will go up with JESUS and the three favoured ones. ^ Oh! how blessed their lot! With Him when others might not draw nigh; with Him when death owned its victor in Jairus' stricken home; with Him when death claimed its Victim in the Garden, and they alone of all living were permitted to behold the awfulness of that sacrifice of human will, the fierceness of that renewed assault of the Prince of darkness! They are with Him now. He taketh them with Him—"leadeth them up into a high mountain apart by themselves." He goeth up there to pray. Oh! blessed hour of prayer! We go up then into the "high mountain," up above the mists, and chills, and darkness, and turmoil, and confused sounds, and distracting sights, of this lower earth—up nearer to heaven, into purer air, where all is calm, and peaceful, and heavenly. And *with Him*. He taketh us. Yes, it is then that "He hideth us privily by His own presence from the provoking of all men; and keepeth us



secretly in His tabernacle from the strife of tongues." And when there He does not leave us to pray alone; He prays with us. "He ever liveth to make intercession" for us. Our prayers are poor, faint, dim; His are strong, blessed, prevailing. And ours too become strong through the strength of His, blessed through the blessedness of His, prevailing through the prevailing power of His.

But behold He is transfigured before them! The fashion of His countenance is altered, and His raiment is "white and glistening," "shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can whiten them." Whence that awful light and glory? Has He put on for one brief moment the robes of His Divine Majesty which He laid aside at His Incarnation? Has He suffered the heavenly light which was in Him, but ever hidden and veiled from the eye of man, to blaze forth, that they may know in Whom they have believed? Hath He willed to display to the dazzled sight of the favoured ones a vision of the Son of Man's coming in His kingdom—of the kingdom of GOD coming with power? O Light of the World, shine upon us with some brief ray of Thy Divine radiance in our hour of prayer! Teach us that the Man of Sorrows is our King of Glory! I suppose the three saw Him as St. John afterwards saw Him in Patmos. I suppose in those

blissful moments their eyes saw the vision which awoke the triumphant song of angel choirs, when that cloud received Him out of their sight on Olivet, and heaven's everlasting doors were lifted up that the King of Glory might come in.

But He is not alone. Who are those two wondrous forms? They too appear in glory—perhaps enfolded in *His* glory, yet themselves doubtless glorious. The three know them. We shall know the saints in heaven. There are only two, but they are, as it were, representative. Do they come as Law and Prophet, doing homage to Him to Whom they bare witness, teaching that the Law and the Prophets were fulfilled in Him? Or is there even a deeper, more mysterious meaning in *their* special appearance? Moses, whom God buried; Elijah, taken up in the flesh—yet both living unto God; each with some bodily form and fashion;—have they come to show that the grave and death and Paradise all own JESUS as their Lord?

But they are conversing! Shall ear of man catch that heavenly converse? Yes, the three, in their amazement—for we are told that they had been growing sleepy, and were roused to full wakefulness by the wondrous vision—the three hear with awe the strange theme those other three, in their blaze of glory, are discussing. They speak, not of the peace of Paradise, not of the

triumph of the Redeemer's kingdom, not of the bliss of the heavenly mansions—no; but of "His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem." Was it not well? Was not this the wonder the angels longed to look into; *the* one great mystery of all time, round which all else—all the peace of Paradise, all the triumph of the kingdom, all the hope of heavenly bliss—grouped themselves; the key of all mysteries; the point on which converged all the types of the Law, all the foreshadowings of prophecy? Oh that, when we read the Law and the Prophets, we may ever hear them speaking to us of the Dying of the Son of GOD!

"Master, it is good for us to be here." Good indeed—always good to be with JESUS—above all other times good to be with Him in such an hour. There are those who at times experience great joy in prayer, whose spirits are easily stirred to the very depths, whose emotions are warm and powerful, who are 'carried away by their feelings,' as people say. Only some are thus moved, and that only at times. Many never are, perhaps cannot be. But are we to say, 'It is all excitement,' 'mere sentiment,' 'mere enthusiasm'? Doubtless there is a danger lest it be so. But may it not be truer to bid such an one simply say, "Master, it is good for us to be here"? CHRIST has work for such natures to do, work

which perhaps demands a soul's enthusiasm, and He may be granting them the vision, attended by which they may go on their way with new life, new hope, new joy. It is told of St. Philip Neri that "sometimes he was heard, as he lay prostrate on the ground, to cry out, 'Enough, O LORD, enough: withhold a little, I beseech Thee, the torrent of Thy sweetness.' At another time, 'Depart from me, O LORD, depart from me. I am yet a mortal man and unable to bear such abundance of heavenly joy. Behold I die, dear LORD, unless Thou art pleased to succour me.'"<sup>1</sup> Possibly no one else ever prayed for the *lessening* of delight in devotion, although something very like this is told of the saintly Fletcher of Madeley, and St. Francis de Sales has utterances full of inexpressible joy in worship. *We* pray for the increase of joy in prayer. Yet it is well to know of those who *have* experienced such joy in the presence of CHRIST as we could fancy the three Apostles must have experienced when the one (ever readiest in speech) cried, "Master, it is good for us to be here." It is well to know this, in order that we may be humbled with the sense of our own coldness, and may be stirred to longings after greater fervour in devotion.

On the other hand, we may draw great comfort from one little feature in the story, when we feel

<sup>1</sup> Alban Butler.

how short a way up the Mount of Transfiguration we can climb, when we kneel before GOD and say, 'LORD, all I have to offer is not fervour of devotion, but a longing to be fervent; not love, but a wish to love; not delight in Thy presence, but a desire to find delight;' for even the three who *were* on the top of the mountain grew heavy with sleepiness; as also in the Garden. Ah! the flesh is weak! Yet they were greater saints than we shall ever be. And JESUS loved them—oh! how mightily! And in the Garden He made excuse for them, for He knew that the spirit was willing.

But such joys, if they come, cannot last. They are but glimpses, and are gone. We can make no tabernacles to secure their abiding presence. Even while we pray, 'Oh that this fervour—this glad sense of God's presence—this blessed Communion with my SAVIOUR on the Mount—could last!' lo! it is gone. The soul sinks down again. Its wings droop. It falls to the ground. The vision is over. The saints are gone. We look up, and see no man "*save Jesus only.*" Not JESUS transfigured, but JESUS as the Man of Sorrows, JESUS as our Pattern of lowly human life. Ah! it is well if we *do* see JESUS even thus! For we must descend the Mount; we must go back to the plain. The night with its wonders is past. It is broad daylight again on

the world. Aye, and sorrows, and anguish, and faithlessness, and mad ravings, and broken hearts are there. When JESUS sent His disciples two and two into every city and village, what was His commission to them? "Heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you." So He sends us also forth. We, under Him, are the physicians of souls. We have to deal with all the manifold diseases of men—the leprosy of a corrupt nature, the palsy of apathy and sloth, the fever of passionate outbreaks of sin. We have to fight with the powers of darkness, and to cast out, in the power of GOD, the evil spirits from their victims. We have to preach the Gospel of the kingdom. It is a mighty task, an awful charge. But when the Apostles came down from the Mount, JESUS did not remain there in His rapture of heavenly glory. He did once remain alone, when He sent them on that midnight voyage; though even then He *saw them* toiling in rowing. But not now. No; He came down too. He went with them on their way. And still He goes forth with His servants. His promise has not failed, "Lo! I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

Well has the great painter combined in one masterpiece of art the two wondrous scenes: above is the Transfiguration; below, the heal-

ing of the lunatic child. Surely there is great teaching in the close linking of the two. From prayer to work, from work to prayer—this seems to be the lesson. Blissful adoration on the mountain-top, blessed ministrations of mercy on the plain below. Neither without the other is a true picture of a CHRIST-like life. The blending of the two is that which makes us most like Him.

And mark how each acts on the other. Are we afraid of our devotions becoming, on the one hand, mere sentiment, empty inflation of the spirit, the mere offspring of an excited imagination, or, on the other hand, dry and unspiritual? Oh! there is no corrective so efficacious as our daily labour among the souls of men. This will give us reality, and this will give us earnestness. When we are full of the hard facts of the daily sins and troubles of men, our prayers can hardly evaporate in sentiment, or become hollow for lack of themes of interest.

Then, on the other side, what are all our labours, all our zeal, all our diligence, without earnest prayer? It is this which gives them their blessedness. It is in the hour of prayer that we win that faith, that love, that gentleness, that sympathy, that forbearance, that CHRIST-like mind, which must characterise all work which is to win a blessing from heaven. For it is in the

hour of prayer that we see the vision of JESUS. I am not talking of any ecstatic sense of nearness to Him now, but simply of the sight of His goodness, love, meekness, purity. And, as our character insensibly becomes more like that of any earthly friend whom we admire and are much with, so also with JESUS. "We all, with unveiled face, reflecting as a mirror the glory of the LORD, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the LORD the Spirit."

We have, we hope, been with JESUS on the Mountain. And we must go back to work. The feelings of such a time as this ~~will~~—must—fade. The soul cannot be kept at such high tension long; and we fear as the cloud passes by, and the brightness, and glory, and splendour of the vision are no more, and we have to go back to our common daily cares and duties and temptations. We will not be disappointed if we do lose some of the glow and fervour of this season of special devotion. But some strength, I trust, we have gathered on our knees to fight our battle the better—some light we have seen to cheer and gladden us when the clouds hang low.

(Once more) we will go up to the Mountain before we part. To-morrow morning we will ask our Master to take us up with Him, and we will try to see Him there transfigured. We will adore Him, and feel that it is good for us to be



there. And we will carry up our offerings, our vows that we have resolved upon—vows of more faithful service, vows of holier living, vows of more earnest seeking for souls. Yes, and we will offer once again that gift—so often given, and alas! so often taken back again—ourselves—body, soul, and spirit—to be His for ever.

And now we come down from the Mount and go to our work on the plain below. But we will take Him with us. He will go with us. Doubt it not. He will walk by our side, though we see Him not; and whether the way be rough or smooth, in shade or sunshine, whether there be much peace, or stern warfare yet to accomplish, still we will keep close to Him.

O JESU, go with us, and we will not fear. Be Thou with us, and we shall not fall. Stay Thou with us, and we are safe for ever. Amen.

## XXV

### Telling all Things to Jesus

“THE Apostles gathered themselves together unto JESUS, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.” And yet I suppose He knew; for it was while they were on their rounds that He, in mystic vision, “beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” Another time, when they were far away, He “saw them toiling in rowing.” Yet they tell Him all. Well, it is the same in all prayer. GOD knows all; yet He would have us tell it to Him, not to inform Him of what He already knows, but to draw out and emphasise the desire in us. Why confess sin to an all-seeing GOD? Plainly it is to deepen the sense of sin in us.

Would it not be well on an Ember Day sometimes to gather together unto JESUS, and tell Him all things, both what we have done, and what we have taught? Perhaps all of us are too shy and reserved with Him, too backward in speaking to Him. We want more freedom in prayer. We are too easily content with stated prayers; so that

half-an-hour in church for silent prayer and meditation is quite irksome; we do not know what to do with it.

Well, we have gathered ourselves together unto JESUS. Are we sure we have? We have no doubt gathered together unto one another; that we can realise. But unto JESUS? Is His presence realised? Is it sought? longed for? cared for? Did you come here, O my brothers, with a simple, earnest wish to meet Him? Then shall we try? As we kneel in silent prayer, shall we try to tell Him all things? Oh! if only we could feel His loving eye upon us, and read that yearning heart, and then speak as to an infinitely tender and gracious Master and Friend!

“All things.” Surely we have *some* things at least we should like to tell Him about: our troubles, trials, failures, disappointments, besetting sins, hindering weaknesses, conscious infirmities. We should like to tell Him about our parish troubles, our vexations and difficulties, our hindrances from others, our thwarted endeavours, motives misconstrued, meaning misunderstood. It will strengthen us to bear these—comfort us in bearing them.

But what we have *done*. The Apostles had travelled from village to village. They had healed the sick, and cast out devils. They had their record, we may be sure, of varied receptions, suc-

cesses, and failures. But no doubt they could tell their story joyfully, thankfully, hopefully. There was no boasting, no self-laudation. It was their Master's strength, not their own, they had proved and found so mighty.

And what have *we* to tell? Can we each one say, 'LORD, I have done what I could. I have laboured night and day. I have never forgotten the awful vows of my Ordination. I have been diligent in prayers and in reading of the Holy Scriptures. I have laid aside the study of the world and the flesh. I have been diligent to frame and fashion myself and my family according to the doctrine of CHRIST, and to make both myself and them, as much as in me lieth, a wholesome example and pattern to the flock of CHRIST. I have maintained and set forwards, as much as in me lieth, quietness, peace, and love among all Christian people. I have reverently obeyed my ordinary and other chief ministers, unto whom is committed the charge and government over me; following with glad mind and will their godly admonitions, and submitting myself to their godly judgments. I have been diligent and constant in my visiting of the sick and of the whole. I have not failed to carry my message from house to house, speaking in season and out of season. I have brought many to Baptism, to Confirmation, and to Holy Communion. I have cared for young and old.

I have attended to the Sunday School and to Temperance work. O LORD, all this I have tried to do, very imperfectly, very faultily, yet earnestly seeking to be found a faithful labourer.'

And then, what we have *taught*. Can we say, 'LORD, I have done as I determined to do, and have taught the people committed to my charge out of the Holy Scriptures, teaching nothing as required of necessity for eternal salvation but that which I am persuaded may be concluded and proved by the Scriptures. I have striven with all faithful diligence to banish and drive away all erroneous and strange doctrines contrary to GOD'S Word; and have used both public and private monitions and exhortations, as well to the sick as to the whole. I have sought to declare to my people the whole counsel of GOD, to be faithful to the pure and holy doctrine of Thy Church, to instruct the ignorant, to awaken the careless, to recover the fallen, to build up the faithful. I have preached the necessity of repentance and faith; honoured Thy Holy Sacraments; sought to teach according to the proportion of faith.'

Alas! alas! how little of all this have we to tell! What shortcomings, indolence, indifference, want of love, want of zeal, shrinking from the cross of self-sacrifice, secularity of living, neglect of opportunities, remissness of pastoral action!

Nay, is it not rather our own inner life which is at fault? Is there nothing there sufficient to account for all this coldness, deadness, unspirituality? No secret self-indulgence? No half-unrecognised taint of impurity? No unchastened temper? No neglect of prayer? of Bible reading? of self-discipline? "Take heed unto *thyself* and to the flock." "Take heed unto *thysself* and to the doctrine." *Thysself* before the flock. *Thysself* before the doctrine.

Well, we will tell Him even this—"all things"—the bad things as well as the good (if there be any good)—aye, the bad most, that we may find pardon, mercy, cleansing, grace, renewal.

O my Master, I am ashamed; yet I will tell Thee all. I am unworthy, unfaithful; yet I dare not be silent. I would even now open my whole soul to Thee. Oh! cast me not out, but hear my sad confession; and pity, pardon, cleanse me in Thy precious Blood! Amen.

## XXVI

### Strength and Love

THERE are two verses, the strange, almost startling contrast of which is full of wonderful instruction. Let me read them :—

“Behold, the LORD GOD will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him; behold His reward is with Him, and His work before Him.

“He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young” (Isaiah xl. 10, 11).

I could not better express the tone of these verses respectively than by the two words I have given as my subject, “Strength and Love.” They are the two supereminent attributes of GOD. GOD is the Almighty; and “GOD is Love.”

The prophet sees a glorious vision of the return of the captive people through the wilderness. They march like a mighty conquering army. The pioneers go before, and cry, “Prepare ye the way of the LORD.” The valleys are to be

exalted ; the mountains and hills to be laid low ; the crooked to be made straight, and the rough places plain. Then comes the burst of triumphant joy, so endeared and emphasised to us all by the grandest efforts of musical genius, "O Zion, that bringest good tidings, get thee up into the high mountain : O Jerusalem, that bringest good tidings, lift up thy voice with strength ; lift it up, be not afraid ; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your GOD !" And lo ! GOD is there ! Is not that He who marcheth as Captain of the host, invisible indeed, yet glorious in majesty, mighty to save ?

He is a GOD of Strength, for "behold the LORD GOD will come with strong hand, and His arm shall rule for Him : behold, His reward is with Him, and His work before Him."

He is a GOD of Love, for "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young."

And this GOD is *our* GOD for ever and ever.

But, like other prophecy, this stretches on into further, fuller, richer meanings. We open the Gospels, and lo ! there we learn how the vision of old has a truer, larger fulfilment in the Coming of the Son of GOD.

It tells of a grander deliverance from a sterner



captivity—of a more glorious march of redeemed ones to a land of promise fairer than any earthly Canaan—of a new voice crying in the wilderness.

There is One in the world—walking among men—growing up before GOD as a tender plant, and as a root out of dry ground,—despised, rejected,—Who came unto His own, and His own received Him not,—One with no form or comeliness, and with no beauty that we should desire Him,—One mocked, scourged, crucified, dead : and Faith looks up, and, with holy trembling awe, cries, “Behold your GOD !” Yes, it is our GOD. “GOD was manifest in the flesh.”

And, as GOD was manifest in the flesh in the person of JESUS CHRIST, so were GOD’s great attributes. “He that hath seen Me hath seen the FATHER.” We will meditate on GOD’s Strength and Love as manifest in the earthly life of the Son of GOD.

1. *Strength.* When mention is made of the *power* of the SON, I suppose our thoughts pass on naturally to His Second Coming. No doubt Strength is characteristic rather of that than of His First Coming. He came “in great humility”; He “made Himself of no reputation” (ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσε); He “humbled Himself.” Therefore we should not expect displays of power. Indeed it is most striking how He refused all display. For example, in His miracles—there never was one for

self-exaltation; He gave no "sign from heaven." Yet surely, even thus, He came not without power. He came to conquer the "strong man armed" as the "stronger than he." If not yet to exercise the "strong hand" on man, see how the devils fled before Him. Behold, too, how He asserted His power over nature. He Who could still storms, walk on the waves, wither trees at His word, showed what power lay hidden within Him. Then lo! what might is revealed in His miracles of healing and of resurrection! He Who could at a word give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf—He Who could cry, "Lazarus, come forth"—surely came with "strong hand." Once more, did not GOD bear witness to His power and might when the sun was darkened, and the rocks rent, and the graves opened, and the veil of the Temple rent in twain? Did not all this declare that One was dying Who was no weak mortal, but the Son of GOD, to Whom thenceforth was given "all power in heaven and in earth"?

2. *Love.* If Strength rather speaks of the Second Coming, certainly Love speaks of the First Coming. What is the history of His earthly life but one long story of infinite Love? The very Incarnation—the "Lo! I come"—all the submission to poverty, pain, sorrow, enmity, persecution, when He could in His omnipotence

have swept His enemies from the earth as He drove the buyers and sellers from the Temple,—all are marvels of Love. If I want to tell the story of Love, I must tell the Gospels through. Even His words of wrath and woe were full of Love. If He denounced sin and impenitence, He Himself tells us what it meant—"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" Behold how He loved His friend Lazarus! Meditate on His wondrous affection for St. John! See how one, not brave enough to take up the cross, won His Love—"He looked on him and loved him!" How He loved the little children! How He loved His Mother, caring for her even in the agonies of the Cross! How He loved all the sick and suffering, ministering daily to them, Himself taking their infirmities and bearing their sicknesses! Aye, but best of all, "He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*."

Thus much of His earthly life. But surely the same features mark still all His relation to us. It would be little to trace the marks of power and love in His earthly life, if that power were gone, that love laid aside, now. Nay, when He said, "All power is given unto Me in heaven

and earth," He spoke not of His earthly but of His heavenly reign. Yes, it is there, at the right hand of the FATHER, that He reigns. It is there "His arm rules for Him." And "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet." Hath not God "given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body"? Is He not in His kingly power able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him? Does He not, as King, dispense His royal gifts? But power without love would be very terrible. This too must be realised. It is not surely of His earthly sojourn only that it is written, "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young." Still He is the Good Shepherd, still gathering into the fold, still coming to seek and to save that which was lost, still full of tender love and gentlest mercy to the poor, wandering, silly sheep. Is it not so? Did He for three years feed, and does He now starve, His flock? His Word—is that less truly food? His Blessed Sacrament—has that lost the Divine power to nourish? When the people at Capernaum found it so hard to believe, He said, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" As though He said, 'Ye find it hard now when ye

can look on Me in the flesh ; what will it be when I am taken from you and ye see Me no more ?' And He is gone ;—yet "the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of Christ ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of Christ ?"

Strength and Love ! Yes, they are the characteristics of JESUS. We look up, and believe, and trust, and hope, for our Master is strong to save, and loveth with an everlasting Love.

And as we, His under-shepherds, go among men preaching JESUS CHRIST, how shall we tell men of Him ? We will tell of His Strength. We will tell how JESUS is reigning, "the LORD GOD omnipotent." We will tell of His healing might. We will magnify His saving power. We will preach the good tidings of the kingdom of GOD, the "Gospel of the kingdom"; how He, the King, is in the kingdom, ruling, blessing, judging, uttering His kingly fiats. We will tell of the blessed potency of His absolving word. We will exalt Him and cease not.

And His Love—it shall be sweeter still to tell of this. Oh ! happy under-shepherds, who may go in the Good Shepherd's name, beseeching men by the tender mercies of CHRIST to come and taste and see how gracious the LORD is ! Oh ! happy those who may enchain their listeners with a theme so beautiful ! The Love of JESUS ! Whose

tongue should falter, whose lips stammer, with such a theme? Oh! for a heart filled with the sweet consolations of His Love, which might teach men, in its overflowings, something of the breadth and length and depth and height of the Love of CHRIST, which passeth knowledge! LORD JESUS, make us to know more of Thy Love, that we may teach the Love to others! Oh! teach us to know how good it is to go to Thee when weary and heavy-laden for rest, that we too may go to the weary and heavy-laden and point them to Thee. Teach us to know how good it is to seek our shelter in Thy wounded Side, that we may go to sinners and tell them of the Fountain open for sin and uncleanness. But yet again—if we under-shepherds are following the Good Shepherd, if we are remembering His word, “As My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you,” then are we too in some measure showing forth His Divine character, bearing His marks before men. Shall these two—Strength and Love—be lacking?

Strength—yes; for not in vain has been spoken over us the consecrating word; not in vain was given to us the gift that is in us by the laying on of hands; not in vain do we go forth bearing authority from CHRIST, speaking as ambassadors of GOD. Are we to hang our heads and falter in speech, as if our word and our commission were the invention of man, or as though we were a

school of speculative philosophers making dim gropes at the unknown? I would not that we should boast of our authority, or lord it over GOD's heritage, as though to us were given a dominion over the faith of our people. But I would not that we should speak timidly, uncertainly, waveringly, as though doubtful of our office and calling. I would that we should go forth in the strength of our GOD, with our message ringing clear, and our brow lifted up in holy confidence, and our eye lit with the fire of a dauntless faith. I would that we should be strong because He that is with us unto the end is strong.

And then, lastly, Love. Strength without Love would be very terrible in GOD. It would be very chilling and repelling in the minister of CHRIST. Sometimes Love will even ask that Strength be laid aside for awhile. Behold how Love drew the Son of GOD to empty Himself of eternal power and majesty! Behold how the Apostle became weak to the weak; how he stooped to entreat Philemon when he might have commanded; how he glories, not in his revelations and privileges, but in his infirmities.

Ah yes! for Love will conquer when Strength has failed. Love will win the poor wandering sheep back to the fold when the arm is powerless to drive. But when Strength and Love are linked

in one; when Love opens the heart, and Strength is present to lean upon; when Love softens, and Strength stays; when Love draws, and Strength confirms—then are we most like the Good Shepherd, Who, as He leads His flock through the wilderness, is All Strength and All Love.



## XXVII

### Faith and Worship

No careful student of the Church's history can fail to have been interested in noting how different tendencies, different modes of thought in religious matters, different phases of religious life, have marked different ages. Thus there were ages when the separate individual spiritual life was the most prominent thought, and ages when it was the corporate life of the Church which held the foremost place. At one time it was the Christian, at another the Church. There were ages when great deep broad views of man's life and destinies occupied the minds of the thinkers, and ages when the veriest minutiae of controversial subtleties, petty unreal distinctions, fanciful unpractical speculations, were pressed to the forefront. Let us trace this as to Faith and Worship.

1. *Faith.* There were ages, like the first, when the Church's attitude was that of an outward look; when there was a grand, unclouded, triumphant realisation of the things unseen, a tendency to look straight away from earth to heaven, from man to

GOD. It was this that fired the courage of the martyrs, and made men gladly suffer the loss of all things that they might win CHRIST. I do not say that there were no controversies in those days. But these gathered round the nature of GOD and the person of the Messiah. They bore witness to the intensity of this gaze towards the things unseen. Men were not content with a dim shape or a blurred outline, but craved definiteness and distinctness in the object of their regard. They sought to know in whom they believed.

The tendency of other ages (like this) is to look within. Religion is subjective. Men are occupied with the secret mysteries of their own inner being, full of questionings as to the relation of man to GOD, gauging and measuring the modes and methods of the soul's actings.

Perhaps the true view is that, with various fluctuations, there is a gradual lapse going on from one tendency to the other. In these days all things are questioned. It is an age of minute analysis. One can trace this change in our hymns. The ancient hymns, Christian hymns, were full of praise. Men loved to sing of the glory and power and majesty of GOD. Now—though there are grand exceptions, such as Heber's "Holy, Holy, Holy"—hymns are cast in a different strain; they are full of sentiment, often

picturing overwrought feelings, which, while congregations love them, very few can really make their own; they contain weak moanings over the heart's sorrows, and the like. This is not an age to compose a *Te Deum*.

Now, doubtless each tendency has its good. If it is a grand thing to possess an unclouded faith, and to have the outward look towards GOD clear and vivid, may not one counterbalancing advantage be found in a tender conscientiousness, a finished delicacy of motive and sentiment, not perhaps so marked in times of less introspection and self-scrutiny?

2. *Worship*. This follows Faith. What truth there is wrapped up in such a sentence as, "When they saw Him, they worshipped Him," or in the account of the blind man who cried, "'LORD, I believe;' and worshipped Him"! I suppose those who doubted did not worship Him on the mountain of Galilee after the Resurrection. There can be little true worship apart from discernment of the *object* of worship. Faith gazes; but not in silence. Worship is the voice of Faith. If so, I suppose ages of vivid faith are most conducive to worship, just as a questioning, introspective age is adverse to worship. It has often been observed that the argumentative, subtle, intellectual habit of mind among the Scotch is accompanied by most meagre conceptions of

worship. The very attitude of worship is the upward, outward look. Did *you*, brothers, never find controversy robbing you of worship?

Now what is the Church's duty in face of the tendency of the age?

(1) I suppose, first to seize the good, to wrest it to GOD's glory, and to guide it into safe and fructifying channels. The Church cannot be indifferent to the spirit of the age. If she be too blind to see the good, or too cramped and straitened to use the good, she straightway loses her hold upon the people.

Well, has the Church in our times been faithful to *this* part of her mission? Has she recognised, seized, used, the good in this subjective tendency of the age? I think so. Surely she has done so in the wonderfully multiplied agencies for helping the spiritual life, in her revived ministrations to troubled consciences, in her personal dealing with souls in missions, in her careful individual preparation for Confirmation, in her Retreats for our Clergy, in her books of devotion, aids to self-examination, and the like.

(2) But the Church has another duty. Not alone has she to use what is good in the tendency of the age, but often to withstand or oppose excessive or dangerous tendencies, to recall forgotten truths, to ask for the old paths, to care that other tendencies of other ages are not for-

gotten or despised, to restore the balance of disproportionate teaching.

And has she been faithful in this? No one can have lived a generation and not discerned evidences of a marvellous increase of definiteness and exactitude in teaching. Dogmatic theology has been accepted and taught by the Church. Amid all the disintegrating processes of the age the Church has been consolidating her faith. Even events which seemed most disastrous, God has allowed the Church to overrule for good. Take, for instance, the Gorham judgment. If this judgment distressed and disturbed some, it undoubtedly brought definiteness and distinctness to the faith of others. I was struck with the fact that, of the candidates for Holy Orders at Lichfield, at the Trinity Ordination 1877, not one failed to accept St. John iii. in the primitive Catholic sense of Holy Baptism. Not that the opinion of these young men is valuable in itself, but it is valuable as evidence of the way in which the truth has permeated the Church. It is the same with Eucharistic doctrine, and indeed with all doctrine. We see in the Church's teaching a clearness and definiteness, which is certainly not due to the spirit of the age, but is a protest against it. Yet I did not mean to speak so much of doctrines, as of a higher, grander, better thing. The Church has brought out marvellously

the Person of the Messiah as an object of faith. His Nature, Life, Example, Teaching, Sacrifice, Atonement, Sovereignty, are the staple of the Church's teaching. I believe that never was CHRIST crucified so fully and faithfully preached as now in the Church of England by all schools. Thank GOD, the historical or doctrinal school, which for a while, I fear, somewhat slighted warm personal preaching of JESUS, as coming from a different school, has now crowned its restored doctrinal exactness with this true evangelical perfection.

And how has it been with Worship? This has followed: when the Object of worship is realised, true worship must follow. See what a change has taken place! Look back; I can remember the time when all was what we should now feel to be terribly cold, slovenly, unlovely, when the prayers were barely endured while people were waiting for the sermon, and when we had to satisfy our musical and devotional instincts by singing Tate and Brady's metrical version of the Psalms. Now where will you go to find that old slovenliness? It is gone. I do believe our people are learning, perhaps have learnt, what true worship is. But in looking back I almost think we scarcely go far enough. As soon as the moral essays of a past generation changed to the warm and loving preaching of CHRIST, worship could not lag far

behind. When men began to open their eyes to the great Object of worship, the rest was a mere question of time.

And the Church has, by GOD's mercy, risen to the call. See how she takes her children by the hand, and draws back the veil, and points to the wondrous vision. 'See,' she cries, 'those prostrate forms bowed low before the Throne on high! Listen to those songs of triumph as they peal through the courts of the heavenly Temple!' It is a vision of holy worship. Yes; but Whom do they worship? Surely none other than He Whom the disciples worshipped on the Mount—the Lamb that was slain. They worship JESUS. Yes; for "Thou art the King of Glory, O CHRIST." "Day by day we magnify Thee: and we worship Thy Name ever world without end." "Prayer shall be made ever unto Him, and daily shall He be praised." "For Thou only art holy; Thou only art the LORD; Thou only, O CHRIST, with the HOLY GHOST, art most high in the glory of GOD the Father." Oh! we long to mingle even our puny voices with the great thundering rush of worship ever going up from the creature to the Creator. Yet oh! how the lips falter and stammer, and the wings of the soul fail, and the spirit drags in the dust, when we strive to worship! Well, we are on this side of the veil. And behind are the saints at rest,

and within are the cherubim and seraphim. And we believe in the Communion of Saints — the blessed fellowship of holy worship! And we hope one day to know more. For if it is blessed to worship when we *believe*, what will it be to worship when we *see*!



## XXVIII

# The Power of Humility

St. Peter vi. 5 : "Be clothed with humility."

THERE is obviously a sort of power in the very opposite to Humility. Self-confidence and self-assertion are not without effect. Anything strong commands a certain amount of power. The gentle, weak, pliant, naturally yield. A masterful character gets its own way often. Partly fear constrains to subservience. The man of strong self-confidence and self-assertion gets his way because men do not care to oppose him. It is troublesome, disagreeable; so they give way.

Is this the strength you covet, my brothers? It may gain its end, but it gains not affection. It may win a victory, but it wins not conviction. It may force into compliance, but it leaves no lasting impress. There is another strength, better, truer, deeper, more lasting—the strength of Humility. For Humility *is* strong. It is almost a paradox. Our conception of Humility scarcely includes

power. It is meek and lowly, gentle and self-forgetting. It does not think it ought to prevail, yet it does prevail. It does not seek power and pre-eminence, yet they are given it.

We will think first of Humility in itself, and afterwards of the secret of its power.

Humility is the most fragile and delicate of all the Christian graces; yet it is the most lovely. It is so tender that one fears that the mere handling of it may rub off the freshness of its bloom. To some it is a good gift of GOD by nature; to others it is won only after hard contest and long self-discipline.

“Humility—the sweetest, loveliest flower  
That bloomed in Paradise, the first that died,  
Has rarely blossomed since on human soil.  
It is so frail and delicate a thing  
That even if ’tis looked upon ’tis gone;  
And he who ventures to esteem it his  
Proves by that thought alone he hath it not.”

—CAROLINE FRY.

It is hard to define. Perhaps, as a natural gift, it may be unconscious self-forgetfulness; as an acquired, grave, voluntary self-abnegation.

The former is one of GOD’s best gifts. If one can forget self, put away all thought of the regard of men, go on quite simply without self-consciousness, be graciously blind to slights or seeming slights, too long-sighted to discern petty mean-

nesses close by, with the eye fixed too earnestly on higher things to be distracted with the phantoms of jealousy or misunderstanding—it is very happy and blessed.

But often this is of nature, not of grace. Then the tempter says, ‘Thou art humble.’ Then if thou listenest and believest, thou art proud—proud of thy humility. But

“He that ventures to esteem it his,  
Proves by that thought alone he hath it not.”

Directly Pride begins, Humility ends. To be proud of Humility is a contradiction of terms.

Archbishop Trench has some lines on Humility worth remembering:—

“If that in sight of God be great  
Which counts itself but small,  
We, by that law, Humility  
The chiefest grace must call,  
Which, being such, knows not itself  
To be a grace at all.”

There is no grace harder to acquire; none more opposed to the strongest tendencies of fallen human nature. Where by nature a man is proud, self-reliant, sensitive, jealous, the battle will be very, very hard.

Pride is the opposite to Humility. But Pride is very subtle, very stubborn, very deceitful. I suppose Pride is seldom the definite conviction of

superiority. I have known people honestly conscious of their own inferiority, yet exorbitantly proud. Pride is rather sensitiveness as to the opinion of others—often as to the affection of others. To some characters it is almost impossible not to be vexing themselves as to what others think of them. They are sure such an one dislikes them. They know such another looks down on them. They see this or that acquaintance is liked better, is more popular, than they are.

Now we will face the question, how to conquer this Pride, and win this Humility. As I said, Humility will not bear rough handling. If you pay it too much attention and deal too directly with it, it gets tarnished and soiled. Like faintly glowing embers, poke them about too much and you put them out; or perhaps like seed in a garden, if a child digs it up to see how it is growing, he kills it. It must be taken by guile, overtaken by indirect approaches.

We will think how to deal with it:—

1. Inwardly—in thought and spirit.
2. Outwardly—in word and act.

1. There must be a steadfast refusal to self of indulgence in thoughts about self; a steadfast putting away of such thoughts, and turning to other and safer thoughts.

Never dwell on things in which you can find

matter for pride, such as on things you have done well, or been told you have done well. Never brood on misunderstandings or unpleasant scenes. It is a strange temptation to many, and especially to certain temperaments, to recall and brood upon misunderstandings and differences. And the strangest thing is that they are not content with repeating to themselves the actual words which were spoken, but aggravate the bitterness by imagining what might have been said, and intensifying the quarrel by adding to it what never occurred. Never yield to this unworthy and unchristian habit.

This last counsel does not seem at first to belong to the same class with the former. You will say, *they* have to do with pride, no doubt, but this is rather a warning against uncharitableness. Perhaps so on the surface. But when I try to think about these things, I find pride and uncharitableness clinging so tightly together that I am often quite unable to disentangle them. An inordinate regard for self is constantly accompanied by ■ jealous or unkindly sensitiveness towards others. It is true there is a superficial vanity quite compatible with much good-nature and kind-heartedness, but that is a very different thing from pride.

Then there are certain considerations which ought to abate pride, and help us to be humble,

and generous in judgment of others—for example, the thought how all we are is of GOD; how He has fenced us about, and warded off the approaches of many forms of sin, and made it very hard for us to fall into them; how our education, and associations, and surroundings, and calling have conduced to form our character and mould our life. Again, there is the utter impossibility of any judgment on our part of comparative merit or demerit, so that our mere reason and common-sense may teach us how senseless is all self-esteem. For example, I know some poor victim to drunkenness. Well, I have never known the temptation. Can I tell how often that poor man has withstood it? But I have my own besetting sin—possibly one of thought, imagination, or temper. How often have I yielded? Can you or I tell or guess what we should have been, brought up with the surroundings of some poor wretched criminal, or what he would have been with our safeguards and surroundings? For my part, when I think how my sins are against grace, and mercy, and light, and knowledge, and love, I do not think the command, “Let each esteem other better than himself,” is so hard as at first sight it seems. Anyhow, if one realises these things, one cannot cherish that phase of pride which shows itself in self-esteem.

2. With regard to outward conduct, whether in word or act.

Sheer boastfulness is too bad taste to need warning against. Yet it were not amiss to make a rule never to speak of one's own merits or deserts. But alas! there are ways, subtle and delicate, by which a man, who is too well bred to boast, will plan to let his good be known. They are miserable things to talk about, yet we must watch, lest through the deceitfulness of our own hearts we fall into such snares,—depreciation of self, that others may praise, or perchance even that we may seem humble; the seemingly accidental allusion which may bring out something to our credit, as, for instance, our familiarity with some branch of information, or our proficiency in some art or accomplishment; the careful avoiding of topics which may reveal something to our discredit, or perchance only show our ignorance; the pretending to knowledge which we do not really possess, such as acquiescing in some chance acquaintance's opinion of a book we have not read, and know only by some scanty review or common report. Then the love of taking the lead. There are many like Diotrophes now. They are not content that others should do the work, even though it be better done. All these things are sins against Humility. If we would win Humility, these must be withstood. There

is one thing more—the pattern of JESUS. “Let this mind be in you which was also in CHRIST JESUS.” The patient, loving study of that example of infinite Humility will do more than direct ways. The more CHRIST is formed in us, the more shall we be, like Him, “meek and lowly in heart.”

And now, how is Humility so strong? By its marvellous attractiveness. It wins an entrance into all hearts. Few can resist it. When I was in East London a small Sisterhood came to work in a certain very rough parish. One of the Sisters became extremely popular, and on the Superior being asked what was the secret of this Sister’s success with such a rough population, she answered, “Oh, they are often rude enough at first, but she just lies down and lets them walk over her, and they will do anything for her.”

Humility asks nothing, yet receives all. No one grudges where nothing is demanded as of right.

The meek do, as a fact, “inherit the earth.” “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted”—(not, of course, if he humbles himself *in order to be* exalted. That proves it is no humility, but only a sham and hypocrisy.)

Oh! we will go forth once more, with new thoughts and resolves to cheer and strengthen us. It is our work to win souls for the Master. Well,



*our own* must first be won, and, being His, must be trained in His school. He shall teach us ; and to-day's lesson shall be, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me ; for I am meek and lowly in heart." And then we will go, full of reverence and consciousness of the Divine presence, full of recollectedness and watchfulness against our own weaknesses—go to our brother men with our hearts overflowing with sympathy, and gracious in their CHRIST-like meekness and humility, and we shall be "strong in the LORD and in the power of His might," and learn that we "can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth us."

## XXIX

### “Manifestation of the Truth”

2 Cor. iv. 2 : “By manifestation of the Truth commending ourselves to every man’s conscience in the sight of God.”—*Epistle for St. Matthew’s Day.*

WE find a parallel to this in chapter vi: “Approving ourselves as the ministers of GOD . . . by the word of Truth, by the power of GOD.” Plainly our hearers should have some consciousness that we are teaching the Truth of GOD. This touches one great part of our duty. We are sharers in the prophetic office—called to be teachers of men. The very purpose and end of the succession of the ministry is “that they may be able to teach others also.” That CHRIST and His Apostles instituted a ministry—orders of men, one of whose functions is to teach—none here would deny.

How vast the responsibility to be entrusted with the Truth!

The Truth is very sacred. It ought to be very dear to us, both as a possession to ourselves, as learners, and as a trust for others, as teachers.

I will not say much of the former aspect, because the latter is the one brought before us in the Epistle. But thus much I will say: the love of the Truth, the eager, earnest desire for the Truth, should surely animate, if any, most of all the teachers of the Truth. The faithful teacher will be ever the patient, humble learner. His soul will be open to the light he has to transmit. The love of Truth has its own reward, for Truth opens its secrets to its lover.

Nor shall we forget the Spirit of Truth. He that loves and longs for the Truth will ever seek the aid and enlightenment of that Spirit which leadeth into all the Truth.

We must have the Truth before we can manifest it.

It is very easy to mistake love of our own opinions, and the desire to fortify and support our own preconceived ideas, for love of the Truth. I am inclined to think love of the Truth for its own sake is rare.

Some, again, ask with Pilate, “What is Truth?” It seems so hard to know. They are so bewildered with the clouds and mists, the cross lights, the half glimpses, the phantoms of earth, that the Truth seems unsearchable, or at best broken, incomplete, variable, uncertain.

Even what GOD has revealed looks dim and half-hidden. Ah yes! we see through a glass

darkly. We know only in part now. It must be so. If GOD could unveil all, we, with our poor feeble sight, could not discern all. He gives us what we can receive.

We are like some tiny insect floating in the misty vastness of some glorious cathedral. It can only see one or two features—a column, a window, a piece of carving. Even if it had intelligence, what could it know of the vastness, and grandeur, and unity of the whole? One often thinks of Newton comparing himself to a boy on the sea-shore, picking up here and there a brighter pebble or smoother shell on the sand, while the ocean of Truth lies unfathomed before him. Well, it is something to believe that Truth *is*—that there is a Truth, positive, one, consistent, eternal—true, as GOD is true—however faint and partial are our glimpses.

O GOD of Truth, open our eyes that we may see!

But we are to manifest the Truth—the Truth we possess—the Truth as manifested to us. Humbly, like the Master, we speak that we do know.

By this manifestation we are to “commend ourselves to every man’s conscience.” Does that mean that every man’s conscience is the supreme judge of Truth? Nay; that were indeed the glorification of what has been called the “veri-

fyng faculty.” That were to deny the very conception of Truth, and to make that true only which to each man seems true. It would then be either everything true, or nothing true, and it would not much matter which. Yet “every man’s conscience” is appealed to by the Apostle. What for? For testimony to the faithfulness of the ministry in setting forth the Truth. It is not that every man’s conscience is the test of your doctrinal orthodoxy. That is simply foolish. But none the less it does, and will, bear witness to the power of Truth. Truth is so mighty that its faithful manifestation bears with power on the conscience of men. They will say, This man loves the Truth, seeks earnestly to set forth the Truth, speaks truthfully. There are no shams, no unrealities, no unfelt, unrealised conventionalities in his teaching. He believes, and therefore speaks.

It is not only that which is manifested which has so much power. Much also lies in the method of manifesting.

The Truth must be manifested *truthfully*, i.e. with a sense of the deep reality and of the utter sacredness of Truth. Oh! how much preaching is wholly, miserably unreal, hollow, superficial—just conventional proprieties strung together—dead forms of words, because coming from no living conviction—never waking up the con-

science, because they are no echo of an awakened conscience. Do let us be real, whatever we are. If we are not eloquent, we can be real, we can speak what our souls know, we can at least speak what our own souls need. We can all learn a great lesson from Edward Irving's experience. His sermons were quite a failure; they never touched the hearts of the people, till some two or three years after he began his ministry he suddenly resolved to preach to his own soul. Then every man's conscience bore witness to his manifestation of the Truth.

One very common thing is for men to speak of high states of Christian experience as if they were familiar with them, when perhaps they have hardly ever really known them. This is not real and truthful. I do not say we should never speak of such things. Nay, a high standard—the very highest—must be lifted up before our people. But we can speak, as Irving would have done, rather of aiming and longing and hoping, than of having attained. "Not as though I had already attained" is not a bad model for the preacher in such high themes.

The Truth, too, must be manifested *lovingly*. "Speaking the Truth in love." A dictatorial positiveness does not best persuade. Let us remember how little people know, how new many things quite familiar to us often sound to them,

how strong prejudice is, how limited the powers of reasoning—above all, how slowly and gradually truths dawned upon ourselves, and grew and shaped themselves—and we shall not then be surprised at the difficulty of gaining an entrance for the truth we would teach. Again, we shall have no little sympathy for what to us seems error, knowing how constantly error is but partial, or one-sided, or exaggerated truth. One man looks at a question from one side, another from another, and each may be looking at a truth, and each only erring by refusing to accept the other's truth as the complement of his own. We may take as an illustration the double aspect of the Holy Communion, as making the memorial of the great all-prevailing Sacrifice both before God and before man. I suppose it is generally allowed that the Eastward position best symbolises the making memorial before God, and the North End position the making memorial before man. And one man values the one position, and another man the other, according as the one or the other aspect seems to him the more important. But are not both true, and even necessary aspects of the memorial? And does the one shut out the other? May not each have its true teaching and value? Surely all such thoughts will teach us to deal lovingly and gently with the weak, even in our setting forth of the Truth. It is very possible

to overdrive the weak of the flock and cause them to fall. In feeding there must be the milk before the strong meat.

The Truth must be manifested very *humbly*. If there are many in a congregation who are very ignorant, there will be some at least who know more than you—more, I mean, of the things you have to speak of. Riper Christians have learnt many a lesson in life's school. They have sat, like Mary, at Jesus' feet. They could give you more than you can give them. They know what love is, live by faith, rejoice in hope. Beware of speaking as if you knew all. Beware of uttering your A B C of Christian Truth as if it were all they could want or welcome. You have yet much to learn. Remember how the aged Ignatius, carried to the lions at Rome, said, *ὡν ἄρχομαι μαθήτης εἶναι*.

But the Truth must be manifested *boldly*, not as if we were ashamed of what we teach, not as if we had no sure belief ourselves. There is no need to stammer over the message. Boldness can go hand in hand with love. What God has taught us we can teach fearlessly. "Seeing that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech." It is not only of doctrines I speak, but of spiritual truths learned in the soul's secret depths, of the grace of true penitence, of pardoning mercy, of strength for the battle with sin, of



victory through the grace of GOD, of the power of faith to overcome. These and the like are surely blessed items of that great manifold Truth by manifestation of which we are to commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of GOD.

Finally, One said, “I am the Truth.” And we will manifest Him. “He” (the HOLY SPIRIT) “shall take of Mine, and shall show it unto you.” “He shall testify of Me.” Yes, set forth CHRIST. In Him is Truth. He came to speak the Truth of GOD, to manifest the Truth to us, and we have to manifest the Truth in Him. And thus “we preach not ourselves, but CHRIST JESUS our LORD, and ourselves your servants for JESUS' sake.”

### XXX

## “The Common People heard Him gladly”

PLAINLY, then, the upper classes, the rich, the cultured, the self-satisfied, did *not* hear Him gladly. He was too plain-spoken, too uncompromising, too fearless in condemnation of their special sins. This is the correlative of “To the poor the Gospel is preached.” It is a mark and note of the Church. She is false to her mission if it be not so.

Shall we think whether there be any fault or shortcoming in this respect in us? any undue regard for the approval of the great, or for acceptability to the rich? any pleasing of men rather than of God? any shrinking from speaking boldly of the vices of the rich, of their selfishness, luxury, love of money? any aiming at a style or language more suited for the rich than for the poor? any lack of sympathy for the poor, or want of power of putting oneself in their place, of understanding their wants, their difficulties, their dangers, their

trials? I am sure the Church of England has much to confess in this respect. It is a great temptation to educated men to speak only to educated men. It is much harder to speak very plainly and simply. It is much harder to adapt one's teaching to a different class than to one's own. And we have yielded to the temptation. Perhaps the upper classes have heard us gladly. Well, that was not what we read about our Master. And it must be perilous to be unlike Him. It was not the upper classes, but the “common people,” who “heard Him gladly.” Do not suppose me foolish enough to hold that we should make our teaching purposely unwelcome to the upper classes. I am only saying we must not seek to please them first.

But why did the common people hear Him gladly?

1. They saw and knew He loved the poor. His heart went out to them. They can soon tell. All sorrow and suffering, all want and weakness, commanded His sympathy. It was the sick who needed the Physician, not the whole. A cry of distress never reached His ear in vain. There was nothing more wanted than conscious need to draw out the supply, whether of healing power or of pardoning grace.

2. Then He spoke straight to their hearts in all the power of simple truth. There was no

padding of His sermons with commonplace remarks. He just spoke what His hearers needed. I have no doubt they could read the reality of His words in His very look. He spoke because He had that to say which would meet their secret longings. It was a Gospel—good tidings—which He had to tell. The common people like plain speaking. They at least have never learned that the use of language is to conceal thoughts.

3. I think, too, they “heard Him gladly” because His life bore witness to His words. There was no divorce between His teaching and His practice. There was no high standard and ideal in His sermons, and self-seeking or laxity in His actions. Common people do admire absolute honesty and truthfulness. And such a life as His was the best enforcement of His lessons. Nay, He could appeal to the teaching of His life in support of the teaching of His words. “Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart.” None ever yet more perfectly fulfilled St. Bernard’s rule, “Pasce verbo : pasce vita : pasce sanctorum orationum fructu.”

Now we will try ourselves in these three points. (I am not forgetting that there are other things besides preaching, and that this is only one part, and not the largest part, of our work. But it is of this I am speaking to-day.) We are often

vexed and disappointed and out of heart because our people seem to heed so little what we say. Possibly few care to listen to us. At any rate we see few of the “common people” in our churches. May it not be our own fault? May it not be that we lack those things which gave its attractive power to our LORD’s preaching? At any rate it is good to examine ourselves.

1. As to our love and sympathy. Assuredly we shall not get many listeners among the poor without love and sympathy. Can they see that we enter into their troubles and trials? Do we show that we feel and understand their simple daily difficulties and perplexities? Are we never hard, dry, unsympathetic? I am sure some tenderness and pity for their troubles will often touch and win their hearts. Let them see that we know how very hard it is in their surroundings to do right; how fiercely they are beset with temptations; how difficult prayer is in such homes as theirs; how little support they get in attempts to do right; how family troubles seem to hinder all; how weary the struggle is with a bad temper, or a passionate nature, or an untamed tongue. Let them feel that we know and grieve over their poverty, their hard battle of life, their crushing cares, their wearing anxiety. I know it is no easy task to rouse in our cold, dull hearts the CHRIST-like sympathy which shall open the

door to their love and confidence. Yet it can be done. We can in our parochial visiting learn these things. We can take them home with us, and carry them into our sermons and our teaching. We can set ourselves side by side with our people more than we do. And when once we have learned the secret of sympathy, and have won something of the Master's loving tenderness, I think the "common people" will begin to hear us also gladly.

2. Then, next, as to the way in which we teach and speak. Is it always with the direct simplicity which carries conviction? What is the secret of such preaching as that of Mr. Moody, who drew such numbers to hear him, and certainly impressed multitudes of the "common people" more or less? It was no beauty of language like that of a Wilberforce or an Alexander; no wealth of imagery like that of a Farrar or a Knox Little; no cultured learning and thoughtful utterance like that of a Liddon or a Church; no racy wit and homely hard-hitting like that of a Spurgeon or a Parker; and yet they came and listened, and many "smote their breasts and returned." What was it? What was the secret? It seems to me it was a rugged earnestness and unmistakable sense of reality which so impressed the people. I heard him many years ago preach in the Agricultural Hall, Islington, on the Passion

of our LORD. I should call it a descriptive sermon. I have heard one of our great Missioners more than once preach on the same subject. The latter was thrillingly vivid in his painting of the scenes; he made one shudder. It was like coming upon one of those great crucifixes one sees by the roadside in the Tyrol, all splashed with blood, dreadfully real and materialistic. Yes; but Moody impressed me more. I felt as I listened to the one, ‘This must be well for the poor and ignorant, who have never realised these scenes.’ I felt as I listened to the other, ‘This man believes utterly, and wants me to believe too.’ He was quite simple and plain. There was not a word of ornament. It was rough enough, but *very real*.

Now, how do you and I preach? Well, all are not gifted alike. I do not want to discourage. But are our sermons and addresses never a playing round about the subject, instead of simple, direct teaching about it? Sometimes I quite rebel against the conventional length of sermons. When we have said all we have to say simply and earnestly, heart speaking to heart, might it not be best to stop? What one wants is to preach because we have something to say, not because we must say something. I suppose the way to be very real in speaking to others is to be very real in dealing with one’s own soul. I do not know how a full

message is to come out of an empty heart. I do not know how a soul like burnt-out ashes is to send a glow of warmth into the chill of a brother's soul. O GOD, make us real! GOD, make us real!

3. Then the life. Ah yes, the life! "Pasce verbo; pasce vitâ." They tell us that in India one reason for the non-success of missionaries is that they live like other Europeans, whereas the Indian mind looks for marked saintliness of habit, and strict self-denial in living, on the part of professors of religion. The poor Hindoo may possibly place too great value upon austerities; but this is only an instance of a great principle. Men judge others, and rightly judge others, more by their lives than by their words. Indeed this is only a branch of the second head, namely, reality. For anything unreal disgusts and repels; and words, however good, when deeds are inconsistent with them, must be horribly unreal. O GOD, help us to live only as we preach! Well, you all know, my brothers, how one may come into a parish gifted with great powers of eloquence. Men will run to hear such a one. All people enjoy real eloquence. It is a treat to listen to beautiful language well spoken. And yet in that parish you will perchance see very little improvement. Not many (shall I say, not any?) conversions; not many (shall I say, not any?) learning



to live devout lives; no apparent lessening of strife, and unkindliness, and pride, and drunkenness, and impurity. Why? Well, this preacher lives much like other men. No one sees him labouring day and night among the sick and poor (though he does what a decent observance of his duties requires). No one finds him careless of his own meals, and ease, and time, and comfort, that he may freely bestow of these on others. He is not a bad man. They do not find fault. Only, he teaches not by his life.

Another comes to a parish. He is no preacher. He is halting in his words, ungainly in his manner. They do not run after him. Yet a change begins to take place in that parish. This man is always at work, always living for others, always ready to sit up with the sick and dying, not afraid of infection, loving and gentle; they cannot offend him; he bears all their rudeness and insults meekly. His life is a reproach, yet one that “smiteth friendly”; but it is a pattern also. And one by one they come, and light steals into homes, and a spirit of kindness and love begins to be felt, and the parish somehow becomes a better place to live in.

Well, if our lives are to teach, they must be more or less like the great life of the great Teacher. God help us all to be more like Him, that so our people may see how fair and lovable

a thing the CHRIST-like life is ! GOD help us all to run our race, more and more "looking unto JESUS" !

Matthew Arnold in one of his sonnets has some lines which well describe for us the spirit which should animate us in our often weary and dispiriting toils. I certainly should not have looked for such lines in the poems of this particular author, but they are all the more striking from such a source. Let me end by quoting them to you :—

" 'Twas August, and the fierce sun overhead  
Smote on the squalid streets of Bethnal Green,  
And the pale weaver, thro' his window seen  
In Spitalfields, looked thrice dispirited.  
I met a preacher there I knew, and said,  
' Ill and o'erworked, how fare you in this scene ? '  
' Bravely ! ' said he, ' for I of late have been  
Much cheered by thought of CHRIST the living Bread ! ' "

## XXXI

# The Vision of God and of Self

Isaiah vi. 5 : "Mine eyes have seen the King, the  
LORD of hosts."

GOD had revealed Himself very gloriously to the prophet in the vision in the Temple. It is a magnificent picture: "I saw the LORD sitting upon a Throne, high and lifted up, and His train filled the Temple. Above it stood the Seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another and said, Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory." And the vision smote the prophet with dismay. GOD's glory, GOD's nearness—they were very terrible. It is always so. When the light of GOD blazes down on a sinful soul, how can it not tremble? If the soul sees GOD, it sees itself in the light of GOD. Wherefore the prophet cries, "Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of un-

clean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." It was the same with Job: "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear; but now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

First meditate on this seeing of GOD. What does it mean? I suppose for the prophet it meant some very real and very glorious unveiling of heavenly things. It was in the most literal sense a vision. His eyes were opened and he saw. *We* do not look for, do not ask for, this. What then does this seeing of GOD mean for us?

It means surely a very real and blessed unfolding to us of GOD's love, and power, and purity, and majesty, through the teaching of the HOLY SPIRIT. I am not speaking of any silly confusions of ecstatic emotion, but of a calm and sober, though very deep and real, revelation of GOD to the soul in waiting upon Him in hours of devotion. In the solemn quietude of a Retreat, in the intense earnestness of a Mission, it is known. How many a one has cried after a first Retreat, or in some Mission, 'Oh! I have heard of GOD all my life by the hearing of the ear, but it has been such shallow surface-work. The sound has come to me, but it has come with a dreamy unreality. I have heard, but as one

might hear a tale of some foreign land. But "now mine eye seeth Thee." Ah yes! I have seen GOD as never before: seen His awful holiness and purity; seen outshadowings of His boundless love and tenderness; seen glorious unveilings of Himself in the face of JESUS CHRIST. Aye, it has all become very real to me. GOD has unsealed the eye of faith to see. I have looked within the veil.' I am sure that to many is granted at such times a strangely solemn and reverent sense of a presence and a power. Two great things seem to lie open and manifest as *the* two great realities of all one's being—*God* and the *soul*.

Now there are some who dread a time of special effort to grasp and bring home to the soul the great things of the world unseen, as tending to unreality. I believe, on the contrary, there is no time when realities so come home to us. I trust it may be so even this day—that as we kneel in silence, GOD may grant some deeper, fuller vision of Himself. Of course such thoughts must be very unreal to the man who has little faith. The more thorough and absorbing the act, the more unreal to him. Deep, heart-broken penitence is very unreal to the man who does not know what sin is, and has never felt its heinousness. Eager, earnest prayer is very unreal to the man who lives for this world and for outer things

alone. Joy and thanksgiving in a sense of pardon are very unreal to the man who does not care whether he is pardoned or not. But which is truly the unreal—the act done with faith that sees through the veil, or the mere outward, formal service of the man who is content to do what is proper and respectable? Oh! away with such trifling with words. If a Retreat (or a Mission) does anything, it brings to religion a sense of awful reality. Those truths, so often listened to, become no mere words, but living things; no mere dogmas of theologians, but tremendous facts. Life and death, GOD and the soul, salvation and eternity, gather round them a new fulness and depth, and intensity of meaning. Perhaps, most of all, we learn at such times to know the love, the meekness, the purity, the self-sacrifice of CHRIST.

Now meditate on the *effect* of this sight of GOD. Shall any one enter into the very presence-chamber of GOD, and there, bowed at His footstool, feel how awful are the splendours of His glory, the piercing fires of His truth, the dazzling whiteness of His purity, and not shrink from that other vision which follows almost of necessity, the vision of self? How dare I look upon this unclean, sin-polluted, unholy soul set in the blazing light of GOD? Must not the first effect be, “Wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in

dust and ashes"? Yes, the stains on the walls, and the dirt on the floor, and the dust on the furniture, of some room with the shutters fast closed, are not seen. But open the shutters, let in the light of day, and lo! the stains, and the dirt, and the dust are at once visible. Even so—"Now mine eye seeth Thee. Wherefore I abhor myself." All this stands on the very threshold of religion—this realising of GOD and self, this setting self in the burning light of GOD's purity. For here is the very foundation of Repentance. I see what I am. It is a hateful sight. "I abhor myself, and repent." May we not almost say that all religion is summed up in this double view? For what are the two requisites of religion? Repentance and Faith. Well, to see self—that is Repentance. To see GOD—that is Faith. The soul has a double look—first inward, into the depths of its own being; secondly outward, away from self to GOD. The one is the look of Repentance; the other of Faith. To see self aright is Repentance; to see GOD aright is Faith. And it is on a due adjustment of these that so much of the happiness and healthfulness of the spiritual life depends. The outer view without the inner is presumption; the inner without the outer, despair. Penitence and Faith must be duly regulated and mutually dependent. But there lie the great root principles. This

double vision will be the spring of new life to the soul.

And we are to work for others, to teach, guide, help. Well, even now we will set our souls naked in GOD's sight, and seek to realise in His holy house the awfulness and nearness of His Divine presence. Perhaps some this very morning did in a measure realise how very solemn a thing it is to be very near to GOD in the Holy Sacrament of CHRIST's Body and Blood. Perhaps He, the ever-blessed SON, was even then known of us in the breaking of bread. And now once again we seek and long to realise GOD's presence. And if so, can we rise from our knees, and pass from the vision, and go forth lightly to speak in GOD's Name? What! *I* to guide others in the narrow way, when so ignorant of it myself? *I* to speak of holiness, when myself so unholy? *I* to warn against sin, when myself so sinful? *I* to tell of CHRIST, when myself so unlike CHRIST? *I* to kindle the flame of love in other souls, when it is scarcely alight in my own? *I* to deal with the doubts and difficulties of others, when myself so lacking in faith? "Woe is me!" For what am I? "A man of unclean lips in the midst of a people of unclean lips"—a sinner among sinners—a clod of earth bidden to kindle the fire of Heaven!

Aye, but where is the "live coal from off the



altar"? This is nought else but the fire of the Spirit of God. May it not be that to you and me even now the Voice speaketh, "Lo! this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged"? Aye, surely the God Who calls thee to thy work for Him leaves not the burden of guilt on thy soul. Surely it is pardoned—the sin of thy past years. It is often a heavy cross that the dear Master lays on thee in the labour He calls thee to. It were heavier than thou couldst bear, hadst thou to carry a load of unforgiven sin also.

Well, but thou art a sinner still. I know it. "A man of unclean lips, in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Does the thought fill you with dread and dismay? Nay, thou shalt turn it into a tower of strength. For see, this sense of sinfulness is the secret of truest sympathy, and sympathy is the secret of strength. There are two ways in which we might seek to win sinners from their sins. One way is to climb up to some lofty eminence and cry, 'Poor sinners, come up hither. You are dying down below there. Those sins of yours are horrible and hateful. It is very bright, very happy, very heavenly up here where I am.' That would be one way; but even if I could get upon that lofty eminence, I should not much care to try that way. The other way is to go down into the plain among the haunts of sin

and misery, to take the poor fallen sinner by the hand, never mind how bad he be, and say, 'My poor brother, or sister, I too am a sinner. I know what human weakness is. I know what temptation is. JESUS CHRIST knew these too. I know more, for I know what sin is. I am more like you than He could be. And now I am come to see if you will let me help you a little. I know you cannot be quite happy in this life of yours. I know that in the secret corner of your heart there is a longing for something better, purer, truer. Oh! I should be so glad if I could help you. Take my hand, and let us see if we can get a little way above all this.' That seems to me a likelier way to succeed. But this is just the acknowledging of ourselves to be "men of unclean lips, in the midst of a people of unclean lips." Ah yes! just because we have sinned, and know what sin is, we can sympathise with poor sinners. By GOD's grace your very weakness shall be your strength.

Yes, and this most of all in that hardest of all work that can fall to any—the work of rescuing poor fallen sisters from a life of sin and degradation. It is very hard work, very disappointing work, very terrible work; but perchance its blessedness may be measured by its difficulty. It *must* be entered upon with the deepest humility, the purest love for souls, the simplest forgetful-

ness of self. Yet would I encourage those on whom GOD seems to be laying this heavy task. You would not lightly touch this dreadful work. Except your heart be pure, and your motive high, I dare not speak to you my words of encouragement. Yet I say them. Go, my brothers, go in the power of love and meekness; go in the sympathy of hearts that know what sin is; go in the consciousness of GOD's strength; go with your lips touched with the live coal of the Spirit of GOD; go and pull some poor child out of the fires. If GOD shall give you but one soul as the reward of your labours, you will have a bright jewel in your crown for eternity. I know you must touch what is very foul and revolting; yet it will not defile you. JESUS touched the loathsome leper; yet could no pollution pass on Him. Go in His Name, go in His strength, go in His purity, and you too shall come forth unstained.

O GOD, we look up to Thee even now. We pray Thee send Thy HOLY SPIRIT to teach and enlighten and reveal. Yea, manifest Thyself to us as we kneel. We tremble as we gaze; for it is a fearful thing to look upon "the King, the LORD of hosts." And it is a more fearful thing to look upon our own sinful souls. Yet we lift up our heads with new boldness. For lo! Thy SON hath lived and died. In Him we are ac-

cepted ; in Him we are pardoned ; in Him we are sanctified. Yea, LORD, I go forth at Thy bidding, full of trust and hope and confidence ; for, weak and sinful and helpless though I am in myself, "I can do all things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me."

## XXXII

### Christ's Commission to His Ministers

Acts xxvi. 18 : "To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me."

IF St. Paul is in any sense a type and pattern of the Christian minister, then what CHRIST called him to do He also calls all who share in the ministry to do. I have read to you the Master's own description of His servant's work ; and it is singularly full and complete. We must not mistake : it speaks of ends, not of means ; it is full and complete as regards the pastor's aim and purpose, but it does not pretend to describe the pastor's duties and methods. It is GOD's way. He gives us principles, and leaves to us the working out of details. He does not deal with us as with little children, to be educated by rule and precept in all little things, but as grown men, with the gift of reason, who should be able to

frame for ourselves such rules and methods as best embody the great principles which He has laid down. I am quite sure that if we kept steadily before us the high aims set forth in this wonderful verse, we should be better and worthier servants of CHRIST than we are.

1. "To open their eyes." The first thing we have to do is to make men *see*. They are blind, groping in the dark. It is our high privilege to open their eyes. Our first word is not "Do," but "See." When Christians of the early Church were brought within the fold they were called 'Illuminati.' They were brought out of darkness into light. In their very baptism, which took place in the early morning, they had to renounce the deeds of darkness, turning to the West, where night was passing away, and then turning to the East, to confess CHRIST as the Sun of Righteousness, their one true Light.

Faith is the eye of the soul—the eye which looks "not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen"—and it is this eye we have to open. How often is it fast shut to all beyond the present, or dazed and dazzled with the glamour of this world! But there is no use in the eyes being open if there is nothing to see. What, then, are the objects of faith? Two main things—self and God. When we begin to discern these, even imperfectly, it is

the opening of our eyes. Do we enough consider this? Do we point to the great eternal truths? Do we try to show GOD to our people? And do we try to show them their own hearts? Are we sure that we always show GOD as He is—I mean, in His true character as revealed in JESUS CHRIST? Do we really try to make them see?

2. "To turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto GOD." This is not so much a separate aim as an immediate result of opening the eyes. Yet we may well regard it separately. It is conversion. Could anything be a truer conversion—a truer turning round—than this? "From darkness to light"—why, this is just facing round the other way. "From the power of Satan unto GOD"—why, this is just salvation, deliverance from bondage, the glorious liberty of the children of GOD. Has there been a too great shrinking from the preaching of conversion because some have seemed to preach nothing else? Has there been a sort of feeling that it is a party thing, a sort of shibboleth, rather to be avoided? I think the Bible is pretty plain as to its necessity. "If any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature." "Behold all things are become new." But the Master Himself says, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." Do let us take

care not to think or speak lightly of what GOD's Word tells us so plainly is needed. Perhaps one reason why the word '*conversion*' is often heard with suspicion is that some have taught the need of a sudden, immediate, conscious conversion, which can be dated by the day and hour, and some have accepted the emotion of a time of excitement, even hysterical outbursts of unrestrained and ignorant enthusiasm, as valid conversion. Do not let the abuse rob us of the use. The man who has faced darkness must be made to face the light. The man who has been in the power of Satan must be turned unto GOD. There must be a true, deep, lasting, thorough change; not in outward conduct only, but in spirit, and heart, and principle.

3. "That they may receive forgiveness of sins." What depths of Divine philosophy, what simple joy for the poor ignorant sinner who repents, are summed up in these words! A very large part of our teaching has to do with forgiveness. How could we speak of forgiveness unless we had first taught the heinousness of sin; unless, even still further back, we had taught the nature and meaning of sin; unless we had taught the mercy of GOD; unless we had taught the efficient cause of justification in the Sacrifice of CHRIST, and so the doctrine of the Atonement; unless we had taught the conditional cause in repentance



and faith, and so the primary terms of acceptance? Again, how can we speak of forgiveness, without speaking of the fruits of forgiveness in gratitude, the new life, peace of mind, assurance of hope unto the end? Again, how can we teach forgiveness, and ignore the Gospel message which we are commissioned to deliver, whether in the calls of the preacher, or in the absolutions of the priest? In fact, this subject involves the whole scheme of salvation—truly the very work and mission of CHRIST, “in Whom we have redemption through His Blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.”

My brothers, if you want your teaching and preaching to bring hope and comfort and peace to poor struggling souls, speak boldly of forgiveness. Preach as your Master did in the parables of the Lost Sheep and of the Prodigal Son, and of the Unmerciful Servant. Tell them of the love that is waiting to be gracious; tell them of the fountain open for sin and uncleanness; tell them of the joy over the sinner that repenteth. You will have many things you will want to say—good things, needful things, I dare say. But do ask yourselves sometimes, when choosing a subject or preparing a sermon, ‘Is this a Gospel?’ Do tell the good news, the glad tidings, again and again. Your people will never be tired of it, and I think you need not be.

4. "And inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me." This is a yet further boon which your people are to receive. How GOD showers His gifts! The forgiven son is received back, and is one of the family again. He has his inheritance among the saints—"the sanctified"—even here. See how justification ever leads on to, or is linked with, sanctification. The penitent sinner is justified, pardoned, and accepted through JESUS CHRIST. But it would be a poor thing to have past sin forgiven, and then to be left as sinful as before. This is not salvation as the Bible sets it forth. "He shall save His people," not from the wrath to come, but "from their sins." It is not the *guilt* only, but the *power*, from which we are saved. And this too is a Gospel, is it not? Why, how many thousands are there, not seeking pardon only, but crying, 'How shall I conquer these wretched sins? How shall I become more pure, and holy, and unselfish?' Yes, tell your people, as they groan under the tyranny of sin, that One has come to deliver them—the Stronger than the strong man—and that in Him they are free. And as they conquer sin they grow in grace. Mark how it is described. We might have expected, 'Sanctified by the Holy Spirit of GOD.' But no, it is "by faith that is in Me" that our LORD speaks of our being sanctified. Well, is not this true?

Faith takes us to JESUS. Faith casts us on His mercy. Faith trusts His promise. Faith beholds His love. And this faith, the pre-requisite of pardon, is also the channel of sanctification; for faith is the root and source of works—that is, of holiness. A true faith in JESUS CHRIST must show itself in loving obedience, in faithful service. But the “inheritance”—yes; for we are called into the kingdom even here. It is ours. It is not a future kingdom, but a present. GOD “hath translated you into the kingdom of His dear SON.” And this, again, is a Gospel—“the Gospel of the kingdom”—“the glad tidings of the kingdom of GOD.”

It would be no bad plan if young deacons took this verse as the foundation and outline of their teaching for some months. They would find in it enough to say.

We will pray GOD to teach us ourselves personally more and more of these profound and most blessed truths, that we may be more worthy to be teachers of men.

### XXXIII

## The Transitive Life of the Parish Priest

“No man liveth to himself.” Let us meditate on this truth as it touches us in our holy calling.

The subject was borne in on me with great force in reading to a sick person 2 Cor. i. 6: “Whether we be afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effectual in the enduring of the same sufferings which we also suffer; or whether we be comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation.”

Now, the wholesomeness of affliction is a very familiar thought. “Whom the LORD loveth, He chasteneth.” When sufferings have come, when brought low with sickness, when the whole life has been darkened with sorrow, when smarting under bitter disappointment, or the like, you, my brothers, have said, ‘This is good for me.’ “It is good for me that I have been afflicted.” You have seen what GOD meant to do, have acknowledged, “Thou of very faithfulness hast caused me to be troubled.”

So too when GOD has poured upon you the sweetness of His wonderful consolations. You have prayed thrice for the removal of some great suffering; and He has spoken, "My strength is made perfect in weakness." You have groaned under the sense of wretched weakness and infirmity; yet GOD has enabled you at last to say, "Most gladly will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of CHRIST may rest upon me." It was well. GOD was very gracious. You thanked Him and took courage. It is much to see in all GOD's dealings the FATHER's hand of love and wisdom.

But have you thought of GOD's purpose, that these dealings should pass on through you to others?

For *their* "consolation and salvation." First, no doubt for your own; for GOD does not use you as a passive channel. The irrigating stream is first to water your own garden. But it is then to pass on and water others. See how St. Paul speaks even of his own conversion as meant for the comfort and encouragement of others: "For this cause," he says, "I obtained mercy, that in me first JESUS CHRIST might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on Him to life everlasting" (1 Tim. i. 16).

But we will first think of the Apostle's two examples.

*Affliction.* Thou hast suffered. For thine own soul's health it was well. Made "perfect through suffering"—this was said of the Captain. Shall the soldier look for a different process? O brother, that bitter, bitter sorrow, when thy heart seemed ready to break, and thy life was as nought in thine eyes, and all the light of the sky was gone out—that dreadful sickening sorrow—was it for thyself alone? Nay, God sent it for thy flock as well as for thee. It was His gift to them—for their "consolation and salvation." It did not belong to thee as thine own possession. They had part claim in it. But how? Exactly as with JESUS. He was "in all points tempted like as we are"—"a Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Why? That He might be the Fountain of boundless sympathy for all suffering; that we might not have an "High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities"; that His whole human heart might beat in response to all human woe. And *thy* sorrow, what hath been the fruit? God sends thee among the sorrows and sufferings of men. Has He not sent thee bearing a new power to feel and enter into their sorrows and sufferings? Is it no gift of God to be able to say, 'Ah brother,' or 'Ah sister,' 'I too have suffered'? Yes, thy sorrow was a gift to the flock, because it was to make thee

gentler, tenderer, more loving, more full of sympathy.

Then *the Consolation*. Has GOD in His great mercy poured balm on thy stricken heart, shed a ray of hope and peace on the darkness of desolation? Has He drawn a veil over this world's brightness that He might open thine eyes to visions of brighter things beyond? Why this consolation? What purpose had GOD? Doubtless one of tender love to thyself. Ah! but not to thee alone. It was to pass on in bountiful fruitfulness to thy people, for *their* "consolation and salvation." GOD "comforteth us in all our tribulations, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of GOD." One that has passed through the storm and found peace, one that has passed through the dark valley of desolation and come to the light—oh, how potent a comforter! Why, his people turn to him "in any trouble," and know they will find in him the help they sorely need. *His* comfort is *their* comfort; *his* peace *their* peace; *his* strength *their* strength. It was in no selfish relief at the lightening of his own burden he received his consolation; he took it in trust for others. Aye, and the more he shed the light on others, the brighter and fairer it shone for himself. He had GOD's comfort; that was

good. Others won that comfort; that was good. Then he had the comfort of comforting others; that was good too.

But the principle is very wide. "No man liveth to himself." Least of all GOD's priest.

And see how this principle meets and refutes a common argument of unbelievers. They are fond of casting the *selfishness* of Christianity in our teeth. 'What is your aim and motive?' they ask. 'Just to save your own souls, to get to heaven, to escape woe.' Their aim and motive, they urge, are far nobler—the elevation of humanity, the grand general welfare of the race. Nay; but see—this very thing lies at the root of Christianity itself. It is strange and startling to hear Christianity accused of selfishness. Why, it is as wide in the embrace of its Divine charity as the world itself! It is the true heavenly Communism. Its very model is the love and self-sacrifice of Him Who loved us and gave Himself for us. Its motto is, "No man liveth unto himself."

All God's dealings with us, all the events of our lives, all the phases of our soul's history, are meant to be transitive: they must pass on to others.

Even our *sins*. Oh, how good GOD is to let even our sins minister to our flock! This is the one thing in which our sympathy with our people



can be fuller, deeper than CHRIST'S. We have had our past sins. Let each look back. Let him think of the deepest stain that in his past life has darkened his soul. Oh! we could even now—long pardoned, long living in the light of justifying grace—even now bow down to the earth, and lay our foreheads in the dust, with shame to think of what we did. Well, the sin, the shame, the miserable weakness—it was a matter between our soul and GOD. Is that all? Is there no sense in which even our sins are permitted to pass on in blessing to our people, for their “consolation and salvation”? Ah yes, brother priests and brother sinners! Our sins must fill us with tender pity and love to sinners. Are they deeply fallen? stained with foul filth? bond-slaves to some cruel taskmaster? Well, and what have *we* been? What *are* we? But we have had such advantages, such helps in childhood, such careful training, such social safeguards, such refined tastes, such educational influences, such foreshadowing of a holy calling. And these—what have *they* had? Nay, how know we which in GOD'S sight ranks highest? So sin should send us forth very gentle and very humble.

Then *Repentance*. Godly sorrow has worked repentance not to be repented of. The stain has been washed out in tears of compunction falling

inwardly on the soul; the burden has been lifted; the sense of guilt replaced by blessed assurance of pardon. This, too, firstly for self—for our own peace and comfort. Yet this too is assuredly meant by GOD to be reproductive in others, for their “consolation and salvation.” This needs but few words. If they who have sinned can feel with sinners, they who have repented can teach the way of repentance. They can show others the mercy waiting for them; they can take them to the Cross; they can speak of the Blood of JESUS CHRIST which cleanseth from all sin; they can tell them of joy and peace in the sense of pardon and restoration.

*The pastoral troubles and vexations.* We may have to bear opposition in good work, misunderstanding and misrepresentation, the imputation of unworthy motives, even such a thing as unmerited suspicion in matters of morality. These are very hard to bear. Well, no doubt they are for the chastening of our own character, teaching us our mistakes, our self-will, our unwisdom. A character will at last come out all the brighter for meek endurance of undeserved wrong. Mind, I am not saying that we must not seek to clear our character when accused. St. Paul is driven even to boasting in self-defence; and loss of character may be loss to our people. Still this trial has its deep searching

power. It humbles, strengthens, consolidates. And it is sent us surely also for others, for their "consolation and salvation."

I once witnessed a very touching example of Christian meekness under provocation. I was walking with the rector of a parish when we met a parishioner who had been for long most offensive and insulting to him, and who on this occasion accused him of some petty misappropriation of money belonging to a choral society. The rector assured him he was mistaken, said the schoolmaster had all the money and the accounts, and begged the man to go and satisfy himself. He said he did not care, nor believe him, and was so insolent that I could hardly keep my temper. But the rector simply held out his hand, and said, "Well, whether you believe me or no, let us shake hands." The man put his hand behind his back and refused; whereupon the rector's only remark was, "You will be sorry for this when I am dead."

Well, our people have very often to bear the same trial. They are misunderstood, unkindly treated, uncharitably construed. Do you think you will not, as their parish priest, go with double power to counsel, and sympathise with, and strengthen, and pray with your people, when GOD has enabled you to pass through the trial in CHRIST-like meekness and forbearance?

*Then our Temptations.* How they beset us! Did we dream that our solemn dedication to God in Holy Orders would place us in a charmed circle where temptation dare not enter? We found out our mistake long ago. There are many temptations peculiar to us clergy—temptations to unreality, narrowness, party spirit, uncharitableness. But most of our temptations are just such as are common to men. The old corrupt nature is still there. Now, even these we may use for the good of our people. If we have learnt how deep is the distress at the persistence of temptation, how long and hard the battle, how crafty and insidious the foe; if we have been taught by experience the ways of fighting and the ways of overcoming, it is plain these cannot end in self. Why, it is the very thing our people want to be helped in. The priest should be able, reverently and humbly, to imitate his Master in this: “In that He suffered being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted.”

Lastly, *our Joys*: the happiness God so graciously gives; home happiness; bright hours of earthly innocent enjoyment. He gives us these in His goodness, first for ourselves. Yes, but also for others; for these should make us bright, happy, hopeful, encouraging. The thankful heart will overflow in streams of happiness for others.

Surely GOD makes us happy that we may make others happy. The pastor should so speak, and teach, and live, and win, that the joy in him should be his people's joy too, even as JESUS prayed for His own, that His joy might remain in them, and that their joy might be full.

## XXXIV

### The Family Life of the Parish Priest

THERE are some for whom the guiding hand of GOD, traced in the circumstances of life, in the place or the nature of their work, in the consciousness of power and aptitude, has marked out a single life as best, highest, wholesomest. They find it better to be even as St. Paul, free from distracting cares, free from possibly conflicting claims, free from social exigences, "for the kingdom of heaven's sake," or perchance "for the present distress." We dare not forget that which is said: "He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the LORD, how he may please the LORD." Yet this is very far indeed from a justification of the compulsory rule of celibacy in the Church of Rome. Manifest perils attend such a rule. Manifest blessings attend the freedom of the English priest from it. For the priest himself, the sympathy, the love, the purity, the peace of home are a fountain of

strength, and joy, and tenderness, and loving-kindness. His home-life is a blessed link with the life of his fellow-men. It bridges over the sharp, abrupt, repelling separateness of class, which in Roman Catholic countries carries with it so often separateness of interests, ideas, and feelings. The homes of the clergy of England I believe to be more often models of pure and holy and happy family life, than the homes of any other class. They are an exquisitely refining element in the social life of the country.

Now the danger of the family life for the parish priest is plain enough. It is summed up by the Apostle: "He that is married careth for the things of the world, how he may please his wife." It is the danger of the substitution of lower motives—setting the family before the parish; preferring society to the Church; perchance caring for the wife before the LORD. Who knows not how easy it is for the married priest to lapse into a pleasant, sociable, easy-going, self-indulgent, semi-worldly clergyman? By 'self-indulgent' of course I do not mean obtrusively, much less grossly, self-indulgent, but yet *really* self-indulgent—loving ease, content in the home circle—not used to, not glad of, not seeking occasion for self-denials. All this is so plain and obvious that it scarcely needs to be said. I desire rather to lead your thoughts to an aspect

of family life not always recognised. We often think of it as a possible instrument of self-indulgence. Do we sufficiently recognise it as an instrument of self-discipline?

Faber in his book on "Growth in Holiness" (chap. ix.), discusses the comparative value of the several sorts of discipline available for those living in religious communities, for secular priests, and for the ordinary laity. Of course he puts the obedience of the religious rule highest. But when he comes to the ordinary layman, he enlarges with much fulness on the discipline of patience to be gathered out of the daily family life, and, affirming the obvious truth that a higher degree of a lower grace may excel a lower degree of a higher grace, he argues that a holy secular, or a layman chastened by long and true inner discipline, may very easily excel the ordinary monk or nun. "What obedience is to the higher and different perfection of monks and nuns, that patience is to the indubitably lower, yet genuine, perfection of men in the world." And the state of grace wrought out by patience in the lower calling may easily excel the state of grace wrought out by obedience in the higher; though on the average he holds that the fruits of obedience to rule are more, and more blessed, than the fruits of patience in the daily discipline of life.

Now we clergy of the Church of England are,



by our liberty of marriage, admitted to this discipline of daily life. Let us think of it. Faber writes, "We may say that, partly from our own badness, and partly from theirs, all mankind, far and near, kindred and others, are a trial to our patience in some way or other." I suppose we are all trained and formed, unconsciously shaped and disciplined, from our earliest childhood in this way. It is often remarked how well large families get on in after life. Probably here is the secret. They have more of this discipline of patience.

But we must narrow our view; and leave out, as common to all, the discipline which comes to us through those not of kindred and home.

I would speak of the closest, holiest, most blessed tie first. It is quite plain that, the closer the bond, the more constant will be the opportunities of friction. These may be very slight with some temperaments, and by God's grace all but unknown. Yet, even where there is least sense of friction, there must be constant occasions for unselfishness, self-abnegation, tender considerateness, delicacy of thoughtfulness. But, generally, there is much, either of greater or less degree, calling for patience, forbearance, generosity. Married life affords most occasions of sorrow, disappointment, perplexity, therefore most of the exercise of the most difficult graces,

or the most delicate shades of graces. Married life is a great training in unselfishness. As an instrument of discipline it is invaluable. So used, it may refine, purify, exalt, ennoble the character to the highest degree.

I cannot but pause to note how often the enormous responsibilities, the boundless possibilities of married life are undertaken with strange lightness and lack of realisation of these things. It is true the married life furnishes wonderful occasions of self-discipline; but it is true also that at times what might be for self-discipline proves to be for self-abasement and deep moral injury.

To return: it would be strange were there nothing to call for exercise of patience and loving forbearance. Some little habit unconsciously annoying, some little discomfort of temper, some little carelessness in very small things, even untidiness or unpunctuality—how often such things, just for want of self-discipline and the grace of patience, become the source of far more serious evils, even of rudeness, moroseness, violence of tongue or temper, marring of perfect love. Then how often in married life has one or other to bear the trial of want of sympathy in interests and occupations on the part of the other, so that, unless the grace of GOD work out patience in the soul, the two lives diverge more

and more, until at last they flow in almost wholly separate channels.

Now in bearing these and such-like things, two points require to be noted: (1) The actual bearing them as an act of self-discipline and of CHRIST-like meekness and patience; (2) The *manner* of bearing them. It is so easy to spoil a good thing by a bad manner. Patience is spoiled by an ungracious and self-important manner. It is robbed of its sanctifying power by display. To bear a little ruffle, while one says by a palpably resigned manner, 'See how patiently I take it,' is to give with one hand and take away with the other. It is no doubt very hard to some to bear small discomforts with perfect cheerfulness, and an entire absence of self-pity. But Faber says, "It is not too much to say that this exercise does more for us, especially in the earlier stages of the devout life, than fast and discipline; and that, when we can go through with it for love of the sweetness of JESUS, we are not far from interior holiness." Oh! do remember that "Be courteous" is an inspired command; and do not imagine it speaks of strangers, and not of the nearest and dearest.

There is one thing I should like to say by way of counsel. Do try to get over that shyness and reserve which is often most difficult to break through where it ought to be easiest. Do try, even

if it is hard at first, to speak to those, who ought as far as can be to share your every thought and feeling, freely about the highest and holiest things.

I must now say a word about children. It is very very easy to know nothing of one's own children—I mean as to their state of soul, their real needs, their inner troubles and difficulties. In a busy life things fall into grooves. We go on our way, and, though we meet so many times a day, our hearts and thoughts are all screened from one another. This is why it is so much easier to talk from time to time to other people's children with reverent affection about their religion than to one's own. Yet, while such conversation ought not to be too common perhaps, nothing so lives in a child's memory, or is so treasured in after-life, as a quiet, simple, earnest religious talk of a father with his child. Again, I would urge those who have children to try to win their confidence, and from time to time to speak with them very lovingly and gently, yet very plainly, about their highest interests.

And we must not forget the servants. You are to give to them "that which is just and equal." I think, with *you*, that includes a care for their spiritual wants, and not alone their wages and their board. Of course a clergyman

takes care to provide Family Prayer, to arrange for the attendance of his servants at church, and the like. But a few separate words of counsel or encouragement now and then will be of more avail, as showing a separate personal interest, and teaching them to feel that you forget not that they are of your flock, and have souls that are made for eternity. Sometimes events in their homes, such as sickness or death, provide opportunities which should not be allowed to slip by. Sometimes the gift of some little book of devotion, or the like, will help one to say a few kind words which will not soon be forgotten.

We were asked when we were ordained to the holy office of the Priesthood — “Will you be diligent to frame and fashion your own selves and your families according to the doctrine of CHRIST; and to make both yourselves and them, as much as in you lieth, wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of CHRIST?” And to this we answered—“I will apply myself thereto, the LORD being my helper.”

## XXXV

### The Confessions of St. Augustine<sup>1</sup>

THERE are few things more profitable than Biography, if it be honest, truthful, and discerning; and the most profitable form of Biography is Autobiography. It brings theories and beliefs into the region of facts, and tests their reality and power. It sets life, duty, feeling before us, as they meet us day by day, in practical life, in the concrete. We live in the concrete, not in the abstract. We live our lives in facts, not in theories. The clear, thoughtful portraying of even a bad life is full of value. How much more of a good life! Can we indeed forget that the highest Revelation of God to man is Biography?

For many perhaps not the least value of all is found in the history of the passing of a soul from bad to good, in the history of a conversion.

Conversion belongs to Christianity. There are very numerous instances here. There are *none*

<sup>1</sup> The outline of this instruction is taken from a lecture upon "St. Augustine of Africa," by the late Rev. W. Kay, D.D.

elsewhere. Conversion, in the sense of a great, entire moral change, as expressed in "If any man be in CHRIST he is a new creature," is peculiar to Christianity.

Justin Martyr, in his "Apology," appeals to the converting power of Christianity. "We can point you to many amongst us as proofs that this has actually occurred." Then, those who are not Christians may be moral themselves, but they neither seek to change the wicked and sensual, nor do they believe in the possibility. *We do*. In all our preaching, mission-work, visiting, is it nothing to *know* of this power? We can often point, like Justin Martyr, to many, or to some, in proof. Let us study one of the grandest examples.

I will not say that it will cheer and encourage us in our own battle with lingering worldliness or secret sin; but it will cheer and encourage us in speaking to, and dealing with, godless sinners. We shall say to ourselves, 'This one at least is not more hopeless than was St. Augustine once.'

1. Mark the impotence of the world to satisfy. Augustine had an abundant store of youthful health, and strength, and capacity for enjoyment. He was clever, eager, successful in all aims: as a boy excelling in games; as a youth outstripping all rivals; winning honours, friends, admirers; flattered, sought after, indulged; with a keen relish for all pleasures; hindered by no scruples

of conscience: the very example of his heathen gods encouraging his evil passions and unrestrained indulgences: one would have thought that, if any one, such an one would have found in the world enough to satisfy. True, there was one thing. He had a mother, who had taken him to church among the catechumens, and who (he well knew) prayed for him. But he easily drowned all thought of this feminine weakness; and his father was a mere popular man of the world. *Yet he was not content.* Listen to his own witness:—

“Deaf to Thy voice, I strayed onward, away from Thee; and Thou heldest Thy peace, O my too tardy Joy! I wandered farther and farther into the barren seed-plots of sorrow, with a proud dejectedness and a restless weariness. I burst through all restraints, but I escaped not Thy scourges: what mortal can? For Thou wast always present, mercifully vigorous, besprinkling with most bitter alloy all my unlawful pleasures, that I might learn to seek pleasures without alloy.”

2. And intellectual excitement was no less impotent to satisfy. He read voraciously, thought intently, grappled eagerly with all great life problems and systems of philosophy. He soon saw through the hollowness and falsity of heathenism. He was then captivated by the



large pretensions and seemingly exhaustive philosophy of Manichæism, which had a peculiar charm for him, as ennobling the mind and spirit, while putting no check on sensual indulgence, as belonging to another sphere: the mind being all of good, matter all of evil, and the union of the two being only a transitory phase, from which the mind would at last emerge, rejoining its own higher sphere. Later on he was influenced for good by the Neo-Platonists, who gave him higher and nobler conceptions of God. Meanwhile he had detected the false philosophy of Manichæism, owing to his progress in scientific knowledge, in which the Manichæans displayed great ignorance, rejecting the guidance of scientific observation. He was still seeking for truth, yet finding it not.

For some time there settled on his mind a miserable scepticism. To him there was no such thing as truth. All was equally false. There was no truth, no goodness, no God. Philosophy could not satisfy him.

He was young, only twenty-seven, yet he had tasted of all the springs with which the world seeks to quench the thirst of her votaries. Each draught was quaffed with intoxicating delight, only to leave the thirst greater than before. Success in life was his. But the crown withered as it was set on his brow.

3. Let us turn to a very different thought—a mother's prayers. This is a thought which can never be absent in contemplating this wonderful life. Monica had watched his career with misery untold; yet her faith had never flagged, nor prayer failed. Think what a holy Christian mother must have gone through, watching the career of her only son—the daring boy, defying and laughing at his mother's womanish counsels; the wild, pleasure-seeking, unbridled youth; the man denouncing the Bible as puerile, seizing on the various philosophies of the day to detect, despise, discard them; then the cynical sceptic, doubting of all things, except, perhaps, a mother's love. No wonder she wept. The wonder is that she still prayed.

Yet two things came to cheer her. When he embraced Manichæism, she went to a learned Bishop, and prayed him to go and reason with him. He refused. "The time is not yet come," he said; "he is full of conceit, taken up with the novelty of these views. There leave him, and only go on praying for him. By-and-by he will find out his mistake." This only made her redouble her entreaties and tears, till the Bishop at last was angry, and said, "Go your way. Live on as you have done. It cannot be that the child of these tears shall perish."

The other incident was a dream. She thought

she was standing on a wooden platform, sorrowful and weeping, when a young man of happy look came up and asked why she was grieving so much. "Because my son is ruined," she said. He answered, "Be of good cheer; look and see; where you are, there is he also." She turned, and saw her son standing by her on the platform.

So hope never forsook her. She told him she believed in CHRIST that before she departed this life she should see him holding the Catholic Faith.

We will tell the story of Monica's faith to mothers grieving over their sons. We will remember it that we too, when our prayers seem vain, may "pray always and not faint."

4. *His Conversion.* Called to the chair of Rhetoric at Milan at the age of twenty-seven, he soon fell under the influence of the great Bishop, St. Ambrose. He was drawn to him by the force of his character, his vigorous intellect, and powerful eloquence. Then began the strange inner conflict, with all the tragical events, vicissitudes, swaying to and fro, interchange of advance and retreat, which mark the history of some great campaign. Such a history belongs to a strong character. It is impossible, unknown, in a weak one. To some GOD grants to escape the battle. Happy they. Happier they who fight and conquer. Beautiful is the character which grows up in a

calm, unruffled course of grace, with few troubles and few temptations, with purity unsullied, and deadly sins unknown. Yet it is grander to suffer and be strong, aye, to bear wounds and scars, if the sin be trampled under foot at last, and the eye lit with the joy of triumph. I do not think all was smooth and easy in the early life of St. Peter or St. Paul.

But we must hasten to the end. Augustine was deeply agitated at hearing of the conversion of certain of his friends and men of learning. He longed for courage to follow; but the world was too strong, and the flesh was too strong. The history of the final struggle is most instructive. There were voices that called forward, tempters that held back, agonies of inward indecision, pleadings of the HOLY SPIRIT, memories of early lessons, thoughts of a mother's prayers. On the other side were friends, interest, pleasure, honour. Let me quote the last scene. "And now this heart-controversy came to a point. I went and cast myself down under a fig-tree, and the floods of tears gushed out freely; and I said, 'How long, O LORD, how long? To-morrow and to-morrow. Why not to-day? Why not now? Why not this hour put an end to my slavery?'" It was then that GOD, "who is sometimes pleased (as if to set at naught man's pride) to weave what we call accidents into the

web of Providence" (*Kay*), suffered him to overhear a childish voice from a neighbouring house singing over and over again, "Take up and read," "Take up and read." He obeyed, and the first words he read were, "Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the LORD JESUS CHRIST." It was over. "O LORD, I am Thy servant," he cried, "Thou brakest my bonds asunder."

On Easter Eve, A.D. 387, at the age of thirty-three, he was baptized at Milan; and, if the tradition be true, the most glorious of all the Church's inspired hymns then first ascended up from hearts full of holy thankfulness to heaven.

5. *Monica*. Once more we turn our eyes to that praying mother. "Shall not the LORD avenge His own elect, though He bear long with them?" Yes, it had come at last. She was there. Who shall tell the joy of that heart when her son was baptized into the faith she held? It was too full for earth. Her "Nunc Dimittis" was said. She had travelled from her home in Africa to be present, and they had started homewards again. "One day," writes the son, "she and I stood at a window looking out on the garden of the house where we lodged. We were speaking about the eternal life of the Saints, which eye never saw, nor ear heard, nor human heart

conceived. The highest earthly delights, we said, were, in respect of the sweetness of that life, not worthy of mention. Gradually, mounting in thought above all this fair scene, up to and beyond the material heavens, into the very bosom of eternity, we remained for awhile in speechless contemplation, and then, breaking silence, I said: 'What if all these glories of earth and heaven, which are for ever proclaiming, "He who abideth for ever made us,"—what if these were all to be hushed, and we were to hear nought but the voice of Eternal Wisdom itself—the voice of Him Whom in all these things we love—would not that moment reveal to us what is meant by "Enter thou into thy Master's joy?"' While I was thus speaking, she said, 'Son, what do I any longer here? I have no remaining earthly hope. There was one thing for which I desired to linger on, namely, that I might see thee a Christian before I died. GOD has done this for me in abundant measure.' "

Five days after this, while at Ostia, she sickened of fever, and in four more she died.

Perhaps if the prayers of our dear Mother the Church were as earnest and persistent as Monica's, we might see more children born anew into her love.

6. I will make no comments of my own. He shall himself give us our closing thoughts. Some

of the sentences will not be quite unknown. Thus writes this saint of GOD in the close of his "Confessions": "And now, LORD, I depend wholly on Thee, and on the hope of Thy mercy. I am a little one, but my FATHER ever liveth, and my Guardian sufficeth me. What temptations I can or cannot resist I know not. My hope is in this, that Thou art faithful, and sufferest us not to be tried above that we are able to bear. Not doubtfully, but with assured consciousness, do I love Thee, O LORD. Thou hast stricken my heart with Thy word, and I have loved Thee! But what do I love when I love Thee? Not the fair face of nature, nor the beauty of the seasons, nor the bright light so dear to these eyes, nor sweet melodies of varied songs, nor the fragrance of flowers and odours and spices, nor manna and honey, nor any earthly good. I asked the earth, and it said, 'I am not He'; and all things that are on earth confessed the same. I asked the sea and the deep, and they said, 'We are not thy GOD: look higher than us.' I asked the air and sky, sun, moon, and stars; and all said, '*We* are not GOD; He made us.'<sup>1</sup> Only in Thyself can we find Thee. Oh! too late have I loved Thee, Thou primæval Beauty! Too late have I loved Thee! I sought Thee amidst those beauteous

<sup>1</sup> Plainly we have here the source of Heber's lines, "I praised the earth in beauty seen," &c.

forms which Thou hast created, and found Thee not ; and yet Thou wast ever near me, calling me to Thyself. And now my whole hope throughout this sorrowful life is only in Thy exceeding great mercy. Give what Thou commandest, and command what Thou wilt. Since Thou hast given Thy only SON to be incarnate, and to die for us ungodly, I need no other help, no other Mediator. My hope is strong in Him that Thou wilt heal all mine infirmities, since He sitteth at Thy right hand to make intercession for us : else I should despair. Many and great are my infirmities, but mightier still is Thy medicine. CHRIST died for all, that they which live should now no longer live to themselves, but to Him Who died for them and rose again."



## XXXVI

### The Cross

*(For Friday at Noon)*

SHALL we gather round the Cross, and stand in spirit with the holy ones there, with bowed heads and hearts full of awe and reverence, beholding afar off? It is the day of the SAVIOUR'S Death, and the very hour. The mid-day sun dare not look on that tremendous scene. It is dark: we cannot see much, cannot pierce far into that awful mystery. Angels desire to look into it. They, too, are beholding now, and I think the cherubim unfold not their wings, but with twain do they cover their face.

We ask for no new thoughts, no unfamiliar aspects of the scene, no subtleties of imagination. It were shocking to go to the Cross for exercise of ingenuity. We want nothing here—we will have nothing—but the old, old truths in the sternly plain words and picturing of the fourfold inspired story. We come to hear and see nothing but what we have heard and seen an hundred times

before. Surely we can want nothing more. It is almost best simply to say the word "THE CROSS," and then go down on our knees in silent adoration.

One is afraid of hurting the picture. Yet bear with me if I try to suggest some order and system for our thoughts.

(I ask you not to take notes this time. It is needless. But, instead, I ask you to kneel, that you may the better realise what we are looking on.)

"O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O LORD."

"Behold the Lamb of God!"

I. *The Sacrifice.* CHRIST our Passover! The Lamb without blemish and without spot!

Oh! mystery of love! Oh! mystery of sin! At which shall I most marvel?

And that sacrifice was for His enemies! for me!

Do I look round on the world, and marvel how "GOD commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us?" Nay, I will look within. It is enough. My heart! My heart! So dead, cold, loveless, earth-bound, sin-stained, hateful! Yet "He loved me and gave Himself for me," as if there were

none other:—with distinguishing, personal, individual love! But how could He single me out among so many millions? Is it not rather mankind in the mass He died to save? Nay, my soul, thou art judging as man. Human infirmity in knowing many must know less of each, in loving many must love each less, in thinking of many must think less distinctly of each. But He is GOD—omniscient. By the power of His divine omniscience His human soul is able to embrace all with individuality of knowledge and of love. So I believe, “He loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*.”

But the Sacrifice! It was the cost of sin. It was the only Atonement, the only way by which man could be brought back to GOD. “GOD was in CHRIST reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” I gaze. What is that which is staining the divine Brow, the sacred Hands and Feet? I know. I hardly dare to say it—yet it was said.

It is the Blood of GOD.

“O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O LORD.”

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

2. *The Example.* What! am I to copy this?

Is this acceptance of the FATHER'S will, this absolute submission, this utter self-abnegation, this perfect patience, this amazing meekness, this gentleness, this longsuffering, this astonishing love and thoughtfulness—is all this, and more, set before me to imitate?

My GOD, the task is too hard!

My will is so rebellious, so unsubdued; how shall I conform it to the perfect will of GOD?

I, so self-indulgent, how can I copy such self-sacrifice? I, so impatient, how can I follow the example of such meekness? I, so selfish, how can I imitate such marvellous thoughtfulness for others? I know that "He was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He opened not His mouth." But what am I that I should dare to try to copy such an example?

Yet (GOD be praised!) there is a magnet drawing my soul nearer—nearer. Oh! I am so far off! Yet I feel the magnet's power. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." O JESU, lifted up upon the Cross, draw *me* unto Thee. I cannot come fast. I halt and hang back. Draw me unto Thee, closer—closer. I know it will be only by coming often here, by gazing often on this scene, by drinking in the lesson of His love, that I shall be drawn nearer.

It is by beholding that I shall be *changed into the same image*.

“O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O LORD.”

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

Listen! One voice from the Cross shall enter into our souls. “My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” This one, because it tells us of one deep awful abyss of the Passion.

It was *desolateness*.

O my SAVIOUR, the only SON OF GOD, Splendour of the Eternal Glory, Radiance of the Everlasting Light, Express Image of the FATHER, One with Everlasting Oneness, Who art “in the Bosom of the FATHER,” hast *Thou* entered this awful chamber of desolateness?

‘Yea, My son, for thy sake.’

And yet I cannot—will not—bear it. I strive to worship; I come into retreat; my hopes are pitched high; but I discover only my own impotence, dryness, unspirituality: and I cry, “Will the LORD absent Himself for ever? And will He be no more entreated? Is His mercy clean gone for ever; and is His promise come utterly to an end for evermore? Hath GOD forgotten to be gracious; and will He shut up His loving-kindness in displeasure?” The desert is dry,

hot, scorched, barren. There are no water-springs in the dry ground. Nay, there are hard rough rocks—dreadful temptations, which beset me on my knees. (I once heard a layman say, if ever he could have doubted the existence of a tempter, he never could when he tried to pray.)

It is hard. But, O JESU, Thou hast passed through this desolateness. I will bear it. Thou knowest all.

“O SAVIOUR of the world, Who by Thy Cross and precious Blood hast redeemed us, save us and help us, we humbly beseech Thee, O LORD.”

“Behold the Lamb of God!”

What is that which He is holding out to me? It seems as though through the darkness I could just discern, looming close to me, a strange outline, very like the Cross on which He hangs. Yes, I hear Him speak. “If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross and follow Me.” It is the condition. He is holding out the Cross even now. What is it? My resolution? Is this my cross? Some new task? Some forward step? Some braver battle with sin? Some more resolute effort for grace? Some acceptance, because it is His will, of that from which I naturally shrink? Some endurance of humiliation, of a sense of inefficiency or failure, with holy submission to Him?

O my Master, I want to follow Thee closer, closer. Teach me to cry, 'Welcome the Cross — any cross Thou wilt — the heaviest, the hardest — though nature shrink back; welcome the Cross, if only it bring me nearer to Thee!' Amen.

## XXXVII

### Our Relation to and Dealings with Nonconformists

It is plain that our relation to Nonconformists must entirely depend upon our conception of the nature and authority of the Church.

Now the word 'Church' is used in various senses, and there is a great deal of very misty language and loose reasoning arising from this varied use.

If we, first of all, limit our view to the Church as a visible outward society, there is a wider and a narrower sense of the word, both in most frequent use. At one time we use the word as equivalent to Christendom, and as signifying the great world-wide society of all baptized people. At another time we use the word to signify a part only of that greater body—that part, namely, which we hold to be the true representative of the original society as founded by CHRIST.

But again, another idea cannot be shut out. CHRIST's kingdom is not of this world. It is



no mere outward and visible society. It has its inner life and spirit; and this inner life and spirit is an infinitely greater thing than the outer form and visible society. Spirit must be always infinitely greater than form. This has led many to ignore the outer altogether, and to imagine a sort of spiritual society, in which outer form and system and unity are little more than helps and privileges, even if not actual hindrances to the true life of faith. Yet the great Founder founded an outward and visible society to be the shell, holding and safeguarding the kernel within. He with His Apostles set up a Church to be the visible embodiment and witness of the grace and truth which came by Him. And He surely meant His disciples through the visible to attain to the invisible, through the body to reach the spirit. At first the body was one and unbroken; and if the outer manifestation and the inward spirit of the Church were not conterminous, it was only because of "false brethren crept in unawares"—sharers in the outward profession, but not sharers in the inward life. At first the inner life of the Church was wholly enfolden in, and embraced within, the outer organisation. The outer in fact was (as regards its area) larger than the inner. It was a great society, with its faithful and its unfaithful members; a field with its tares and wheat; a net with its good and bad fish.

But very soon there came schisms—rents and divisions in the outward society. Then at once the question arose, Which is the true, the original, the CHRIST-founded, the GOD-blessed society? And this is a question we of these latter days have to answer with all fulness of responsibility for the faithfulness and truthfulness of an answer. There are a number of claimants with their several pleas. *Which bears the Master's authority?* All cannot be equally true. It would be a great joy to me if I could accept what some teach, that outward forms and embodiments of Christianity matter little, so long as there is love for GOD and man. I cannot so read my Bible nor history. I believe my Master constituted a society, with its system, and laws, and government, and duties, and privileges, and powers; and I believe I am bound to find an answer to the question, Where can I at this day recognise the truest and most faithful embodiment of His society? Now I have never had any sort of difficulty or hesitation as to my answer to such a question. Thank GOD, I have not had to work out the answer from the beginning by my own unassisted and most inadequate powers of reason and research. Thank GOD for His mercy in placing me, without my own choice, in this dear Church of England. But all my heart and soul confirms and ratifies this mercy. It is GOD's way in many things

that we should gain knowledge by first accepting and then testing what He gives. "If any man *will do* His will" (it is 'willeth to do' θέλει ποιῆν) "he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of GOD." "Crede ut scias." Love your Creed, and you shall see its beauty. So with your Church. Take it as from GOD, and see whether it corresponds with the inner needs of your soul. For my part, in the Church of England I hail my mother, my dear, dear mother, that has held me in her arms, and fed me, and taught me, and trained me, and guarded me, and led me by the hand; whose Sacraments have been my life, whose doctrines have been my strength, whose services have been my joy. She has been to me the handmaid of the LORD; she has brought me to JESUS; she has ministered to me of His gifts; she has witnessed to me of His SPIRIT. How could I not love thee, O my mother? How could I slight or despise thee? How could I forsake thee, or do thee wrong?

But I must lead you back, my brothers. I could hardly do so better than by reading to you a wonderful and characteristic passage from Pusey, on Joel ii. 32, full of his deep insight into spiritual things, though cast in his somewhat involved and cumbrous style. He is speaking of Mount Sion and Jerusalem as a type of the Church of CHRIST. "Of that Church," he

writes, "we are in baptism all made members, when we are made members of CHRIST, children of GOD, and heirs of heaven. Of that Church all remain members who do not, by viciousness of life, or rejecting the truth of GOD, cast themselves out of it. They then are members of the *soul* of the Church, who, not being members of the visible communion and society, know not that, in not becoming members of it, they are rejecting the command of CHRIST, to whom by faith and love, and in obedience, they cleave. And *they*, being members of the *body*, or visible communion of the Church, are not members of the *soul* of the Church, who, amid outward profession of the faith, do, in heart or deeds, deny Him Whom in words they confess. The deliverance promised in that day is to those who, being in the body of the Church, shall by true faith in CHRIST and fervent love to Him belong to the soul of the Church also, or who, although not in the body of the Church, shall not through their own fault have ceased to be in the body, and shall belong to its soul in that, through faith and love, they cleave to CHRIST, its Head." I have often heard the term "invisible Church," as applied to the faithful, in contradistinction to the nominal disciples of CHRIST, objected to, partly, I think, as not a Scriptural term, and partly perhaps as tending to detract from the

importance of acknowledging a divinely appointed visible Church, possibly also as a term more fitly implying the Church within the veil. Yet it seems very much the same thing as Pusey's "*soul* of the Church."

Now, that GOD'S HOLY SPIRIT works in those outside the one truest embodiment of the visible Church, is one of the simplest and most obvious of facts; and this is equally true whatever body you hold to represent that truest embodiment; for the fruit of the SPIRIT is plainly to be found in all. Not to allude to the manifest heights of grace and holiness reached by holy men and women in the Roman communion, which communion we hold to have greatly erred, and certainly in this country not to represent the ancient historic Church of the land, who can doubt the deep personal holiness of many in every branch of dissent? It is a great privilege to know how GOD'S grace works in many whom we hold to be mistaken in many points. It is a great help to charity to witness the real goodness of many who ignore the unity of CHRIST'S kingdom.

It has often struck me that an excellent illustration of this fact may be found in the way in which the life and fruitfulness of some branch of a tree—say of a vine—are maintained. The bark, binding all together in outward unity, undoubt-

edly helps to the healthfulness of the whole branch. Yet the sap is drawn into the branch through many ducts and channels. These may be uninjured, and may serve their purpose of conveying nourishment to the branch, even when the bark is mutilated and torn. So with the SPIRIT OF GOD in the soul of man. Doubtless the channels of love, and faith, and prayer, and self-sacrifice may be sound and healthy, even where outward unity is marred; yet we can scarcely help believing that, had outward unity been preserved, all would have been still more blessed and beautiful.

So, when we are considering how to regard Nonconformist sects in relation to the Church, we would say that, if the word 'Church' is used in its widest sense, they are rather divisions *within* than divisions *from* the Church. But if the word 'Church' is used of what we hold to be the truest and best embodiment and representative of the society or kingdom founded by CHRIST and His Apostles, then the members of such sects, though not of the *body*, may be of the *soul* of the Church.

And now how do these thoughts affect our dealings with Dissenters? Surely they would lead one first of all to enforce the utmost gentleness, forbearance, and even generosity. No one who knows anything of the history of religion in

this land can imagine that the guilt of separation can be cast wholly upon the separatists. Think what the Church was in the days when most of the sects arose. Was there no excuse? Had the Church's deadness, worldliness, unspirituality, carelessness, coldness, formality, nothing to do with the separation of earnest, zealous, loving, even if uninstructed souls? Was the Church's own teaching such as to make men shrink from breach of unity?

Then, next, let us always try to discern the truth underlying every form of error. Every error which has obtained wide currency has been one-sided truth. Let us gladly acknowledge the truth contended for. For example, in the Independents we would recognise a not uncalled-for assertion of the rights of the people; in the Baptists the responsibility of a personal choice; in the Methodists the necessity for conversion; in the Plymouth Brethren the spirituality of religion.

I do not think direct arguments or controversy are of much use. Be as kind and friendly as you can, and show by your life and by your love that you have a truer faith than they.

It is very sad that differences of belief often seem to repel more than actual sin. Is it not true that we sometimes dislike a godly, pious person whose opinions we cannot share, more than

a worldly person with whose opinions we are in general agreement? One can understand too easily. Yet it should not be.

We do so long to work with them very heartily. We can, of course, in all social and philanthropic matters. But, say they, surely religious matters stand on higher ground, and should draw us together more perfectly. Alas! yes. But there is such a thing as truth and principle, and there is such a danger as that of compromising truth and principle. It is better to say plainly that, much as we long to be able to work together in all things, we must not risk seeming not to care for or value truths which we hold, and they do not. I am sure they do not honour or esteem us more for hiding our convictions and keeping our principles out of sight. So my rule has been gladly to work with them where it is possible to do so without compromise of principle; but in directly religious work to say, Till God gives us the blessing of unity, it is best for each to work in his own way. But, then, let us not fail to credit them with longing, as *we* long, to do God's work in the world, and let us watch all true and worthy efforts with sympathy and charity, even if we cannot take part in them.

Well, after all, thank God the field of truth which we hold in common is far larger than the



little separate enclosures which mark off our differences. Do let us rejoice in what we hold in common, and, when we are in the company of dissenters, try to think more of it than of our points of difference. And let us pray; GOD can, in His own time and in His own way, reunite the sundered portions of His kingdom—the lesser fragments within the borders of our own beloved land—the greater divisions of the Churches of Christendom.

## XXXVIII

### The Miraculous Draught of Fishes

“CHILDREN, have ye any meat?” Have ye taken any spoil for the Master?

Lo! He stands upon the shore, the shore to which the fishers are steering their boat, dragging their net behind them. It is early morning twilight. He is unknown, unrecognised, as yet. But they are startled as a sudden Voice comes out from the shore, across the gleaming water, demanding what success.

And we too are “fishers of men.” Out on the sea of life hath He sent us. How long ago? Each of us is, I think, this Ember Day remembering the one solemn day when JESUS sent him to be a fisher of men. How long ago? How many years have I been a toiler at CHRIST’S net? And now, in this Retreat, may we not hear a Voice, perhaps startling in its suddenness, crying from the shore, “Children, have ye any meat?”

In a Retreat the first question is, ‘What is the

state of my own soul?' and the second question is, 'What is the fruit of my ministry?'

What account shall we give of *our* fishing for men? What have we to show for our toil—our long years of toil? Little enough, GOD knoweth!

Well, the disciples had nothing that night, yet the blessing came when JESUS came.

Has there been anything wrong in our fishing? any slackness of labour? any fear of launching out into the deep, where there is more toil and more peril? any ignorance or perverseness in the manner of handling the net? Most likely all of these, more or less. Let each one question himself. (It is a fitting day.) Have I really toiled in casting the net as a fisher of men? Has it been a matter of intense, eager, devoted interest? Have I appraised the value of an immortal soul? Have I been ready and anxious to spend and be spent?

We will leave the figure for a while. In visiting among my people, have I always borne in mind what I am, why I come, what I want? Have I had a yearning for their souls? Even when, through various causes, I have been prevented addressing myself to spiritual matters, have I longed for the opportunity, watched for it, been disappointed at losing it? Then, has my dealing, when the opportunity has been given, been both wise and bold? Have I been gentle,

patient, sympathising, considerate, forbearing? Has my dealing been anything like my Master's? Think of one or two instances of His gracious dealing. How searching were His words to the rich young man, whom (with all his faults) He beheld (gazing at him with an earnest longing for his soul), and loved! How merciful He was to the guilty woman in the Temple! How compassionate to another like sinner who came to Him with her tears, in the scornful Simon's house! How marvellously forgiving to him who denied Him thrice!

And I—oh! how often have little discourtesies, misapprehensions, difficulties, vexed, ruffled, disturbed me! I have been hasty, sharp, ready to show annoyance. How can I take offence at anything, when I think of Him! *They have not struck me, or spit on me, yet.* Then, on the other hand, I have shrunk from plain speaking. I met one day with a godless man. We spoke. It came into my mind, 'Here is a soul, for which Jesus died, perishing in sin; you dare not pass by on the other side.' So I said a word about his state: 'Shall I ever see you leaving off your sin?' or 'Shall I ever see you in your place at church?' And then he gave some evasive answer; and I knew I should make him angry, or should have an unpleasant argument, if I went on, so I smiled, shook my head, made some general

remark, which might do almost for any one, and we parted. And *I knew, he knew, I had not cared for his soul.* I knew, as plainly as possible, *that* could do no good. Yet it salved my conscience. I have no doubt he said to himself afterwards, 'Yes, he thought he ought to say something. He's paid for it. It's easy work, if that's all.' Then, again, I have been soon weary and lacked perseverance. If I have cast the net (to take up the figure once more), I have cast it listlessly, and then held it so slackly that the fish could easily swim out again. I have dealt with a sinful soul on a bed of sickness, and made some little impression. I have had some hope that he has been safe in the net. Then has come recovery, and I have neglected him, I have not pressed on him the vows and hopes of the sick-bed—not warned him of the peril of back-sliding. I have let him escape into the pathless ocean of the world. Are there none in my parish, souls for whom I must give account, to whom I have never spoken one serious word of counsel, warning, or encouragement?

Then there is Preaching. How have I cast the net here? What has my preaching been? Has it been the best I could do? Have I toiled at my work? If I have been ready of speech, and have found preaching easy, have I therefore been more careless? Have I put off preparation?

or chosen an easy subject, when a harder was suggested by the Church services, or was needful for my people? Have I thought of myself, and not of the glory of God, and the souls of my flock? Have I cast the net hastily, with a splash and noise, not simply caring to gather souls into the kingdom? Or, if I have found preaching hard and toilsome, if I have been denied the gift of eloquence and ready language, have I shrunk from the labour? Or have I perchance persuaded myself to undervalue preaching, and to say, 'Anything will do'? to preach others' words to save myself trouble, and not because I honestly believe them better? to forget to say to myself, 'Here am I set to be a "fisher of men," with a message to deliver, CHRIST to preach, a flock to tend, lambs to feed?' I may not be eloquent, or clever, or gifted with powers of voice or persuasiveness of manner, but surely I can tell very simply and plainly what JESUS has done, is doing, will do for sinners? I can tell, can I not, what the LORD hath done for my own soul—not as relating experiences, but as speaking from experience. I can enter into their difficulties, for do I not find the same difficulties in my own inner life? I can tell them about sins, for have not I sinned? I can show them the SAVIOUR of sinners, for *have not I*—? Ah! must we ever stop here suddenly? Well, I would hope not.

Yet, O my brothers, when casting our nets, what we want is to have been caught ourselves!—if I may say it reverently, to “speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen.” Then we can leave it to GOD. What if no man regardeth our testimony? It was so with One Whose steps we are following afar off. They would not listen to *Him*. Who are we that we chafe and fret if men will not listen to us? But we must be real, natural, simple, in earnest, never making fine language, never padding our sermons with conventional commonplaces, never straining after effect, never putting on a manner not our own. Short, simple, very earnest sermons from a man of holy life are worth all the brilliant oratory in the world. That sermon of a holy life is preaching loudly all the time. The words spoken may be feeble, like some air without much melody in it, but a rich accompaniment can make the simplest air touchingly beautiful.

“Children, have ye any meat?” It is the LORD. He stands there on that dim shore in the breaking morning twilight. It is a type of the end. One more cast of the net, and then the shore of eternity. Yes, He has asked the question now; and He bids us cast the net again—He sends us back to our parishes. Perchance He means to bless our toils. I know not. But it may be the *last cast*. Oh! to wield and cast the net as

though we knew it to be the *last*! If I could know 'I shall die next month or next winter,' how should I labour for JESUS! Why not do so now? and always? It must be *soon*. A little while and once more will He stand on the shore asking, "Children, have ye any meat?" "Every eye shall see Him." Behold how Love first knew Him in the ship! "It is the LORD." Keen-sighted, eagle-eyed *Love knew* Him. Would *our* hearts go forth in loving recognition if He came now? "It is the LORD." Did not the eye light up with love? I do not think that there was any fear to mar the perfection of that love. Then, behold how *Faith* flew to Him! The boat is too slow. He casts himself into the sea to get to Him. Anything, anyhow, so that he may flee to JESUS. Would *our* hearts spring forth in eager joy to meet Him? Oh! sometimes it seems very sweet to picture the vision! All toils ended; no more tossings and buffetings of life's rough sea; no more straining at the net and taking nothing; no more wondering where the Master is, and why He so long delayeth His coming; no more feebleness and weariness and failure! There is the shore of eternity; and there is JESUS! Oh! the rest and peace and joy of that meeting! The heart is full of tears of exquisite joy. We have all we want now. "It is the LORD," and it is enough. Safe home! Safe



home! I cannot forbear quoting a verse of Neale's translation of one of the most lovely of the Greek hymns:—

“The exile is at home!  
Oh, nights and days of tears,  
Oh, longings not to roam,  
Oh, sins and doubts and fears:  
What matters now grief's darkest day?  
The King has wiped those tears away.”

And then comes the mystic feast. Was that food, so marvellously provided on the shore, a type of the heavenly feast, when we are to be the guests, and the Son of GOD Himself to come forth and serve?—a type perhaps of that of which that other heavenly feast is itself only a dim, shadowy type, of the fulness of joy in the presence of GOD, ministered to us, enhanced and consummated by the Redeemer's overflowing love? So it is thought. But there is a strange addition to the feast. “Bring of the fish which ye have now caught.” And then the net is drawn to shore, “full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three.” There is no parting of the good and bad, as before; none are to be cast away now. The very number is fixed, perhaps containing in it some divine completeness. There is no breaking of the net now, “for all there were so many.” No; it is a different picture which is now set before us. It is a type of the end, the gathering in of

the redeemed and justified to the shore of eternity. The fishers have done their task for ever. And that strange addition to the feast—what is it? The LORD would add from that which they had taken, to the mystic food which He Himself had provided. Oh yes, yes, brother toilers in the fishing for men, it is true, most true! Those whom we have taken in the Gospel net, they shall be our joy and crown of rejoicing when the Master comes! What the joy of heaven will be we know not. If it could be said of the things revealed to us even now that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which GOD hath prepared for them that love Him,” how much more of that bliss which “doth not yet appear”! But of that bliss some portion we believe will consist in the blessed welcome of those souls which we have helped, under GOD, to save. They shall “receive you into the everlasting habitations.” *How many will be there to welcome us?* Oh! see Him as He stands there on the shore. Is He not standing there *now*, gazing on us wistfully, lovingly, perhaps anxiously; pitying us if we are mourning over fruitless, or seemingly fruitless, toils; coming in the twilight stillness? Is it not *His* tender, loving Voice that comes over the water, setting us to review our work, and take account of our labours—“Children, have ye any meat?”

“The night is far spent, the day is at hand.”  
Once more at His word we will let down the net.  
We are not far from the shore. Some of us  
may be soon there. All of us soon; for what  
are a few more years, if such there are for us?  
We will labour on, thinking of Him Who stands  
there watching.

It may be we shall once more hear the Voice,  
as faint, weary, worn, yet dragging our net, we  
approach the land—not now “Children, have ye  
any meat?” but “COME AND DINE.”

## XXXIX

### Spiritual Joy

Is not joy a *duty* which springs from faith in God's goodness and love? Yet there are those who shrink away from joy in their religion because they know how little they deserve it. They are always looking at religion on its penitential side. They cry, How *can* I, how *dare* I, be happy, when I am so great a sinner? They are always gazing inwards on their own sin-stained souls, and cannot, or will not, lift themselves up and look out upon the sunshine of God's love. They are like men sitting in a room with their backs to the light and complaining that they cannot see the sunshine. What they need is to get up and look out of the window. They keep crying, "Have mercy upon me, O God"; "I acknowledge my faults; and my sin is ever before me"; "Behold, I was shapen in wickedness"; "The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, shalt Thou not despise"; while they forget to add, "Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness, that the

bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice"; "Thou shalt open my lips, O LORD, and my mouth shall shew Thy praise." Oh! how marvellous and how comforting are these up-wellings of joy and praise in the very midst of the utterance of deepest penitence! Truly the healthfulness of the spiritual life depends upon the due adjustment of the inward and the outward looks, the inward look of penitence and the outward look of praise. If the outward look without the inward would be presumption, the inward without the outward would be despair. I do not think God meant any one of us, however conscious of grievous and hateful sin, to say, "I will go mourning all the days of my life." There are such things—and they are among the best gifts of GOD—as "joy and peace in believing."

Can a life of refusal of the simple sinless elements of daily happiness be such a life as GOD loves best? I am not pleading against self-denials and self-discipline. I know how good and blessed and needful these are. The rebellious flesh requires much mortifying. But if our loving FATHER offers us such innocent joys as brighten and cheer our pathway as we travel on, is it HIS will that we should put these from us with a frightened hand, and say, 'I dare not be glad and happy'? I do think we ought to aim at more childlike simplicity in dealing with the

good gifts of GOD. There is surely a danger of morbid self-vexing, and ungracious blindness to mercies, in the ascetic refusal of sinless joy. It does not seem to me right that a child of a loving GOD should be always sad. I cannot counsel even a penitent to walk on the sunless side of the street, when there is sunshine and warmth on the other side.

I am thinking now solely of the Christian's own duty to himself in this matter of joy. The question I ask is, Has the Christian man any right to be always sad and melancholy? "But there are all these miserable sins, past and present. Oh! such a heap lying there in the past—oh! such wretched weakness, and shortcoming, and faithlessness, and cold-heartedness, and earthliness, in the present!" Yes, I know it; and yet you cannot cut one command out of the Bible, and refuse to obey it, because you choose to think it is not for you. "Rejoice in the LORD alway; and again I say, Rejoice." There it stands, and he may run that reads. There is a curious chapter in that curious book, Faber's "Notes on Doctrinal and Spiritual Subjects"—a book full of rank Romanism, but with many very shrewd and striking passages, in which a colloquy is given with one full of anxiety at frequent failure, and disheartened by all sorts of doubts and difficulties. The poor complaining and desponding soul is

at last met by this: "I am afraid you will think me most provokingly and perversely cheerful. But the fact is, I have no eye for darkness. I can never see anything but light anywhere. It puts me quite in spirits arguing with these discouragements." I confess I like this elastic spirit of encouragement. I am inclined to think more suffer from discouragement than from over-confidence. At least I believe an encouraging preacher and teacher wins more souls for the SAVIOUR than one who lives to wield the terrors and denunciations of the law.

Is there no peril lest an over-ascetic form of religion lean too much to the idea of propitiation of an angry GOD by self-torture, and ignore the freedom of those whom the SON has made free, and the holy gladness of those who have been redeemed by the Blood of the one all-prevailing Sacrifice? I am afraid of the loss of childlike simplicity in the perplexities of a self-torturing conscience, or the distresses of a self-relying attempt to make amends for wrong-doing. One does long for a little more of the *abandon* of a heart that casts itself on the infinite mercies of CHRIST, and cries—

"Nothing in my hand I bring;  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

When the guilty soul asks, "What shall I render unto the LORD?" remember the answer

is, "*I will receive.*" Not, 'I will give,' for I have nothing to give, but "*I will receive.*" All the giving is on GOD's side.

Let me say quite clearly that joy in religion, while a gift of a loving FATHER, a blessed privilege, and even a duty and obligation, must be based on a conscious sense of GOD's relation to us, and of our relation to Him. There is such a thing as a shallow indifference to the heinousness of sin, and a light-hearted assumption of the right to rejoice, which may only hinder penitence, and build a superstructure upon a fragile and false foundation. I am not pleading for joy apart from its due and proper sources and conditions. Moreover, there may be a happiness of disposition and a keen sense of enjoyment which is wholly of nature, and in no wise of grace. It is when there is a secret fountain of gladness springing from the sense of forgiven sin, and the consciousness of GOD's presence and love—it is then that the truest and purest Christian joy is found. And I think we are most of us lacking in faith to realise GOD's goodness and mercy and pardon. We hold these things as doctrines without bringing them home to our hearts. Perhaps we should have more joy in religion if we had more faith.

Then we must not quite pass by the spiritual hindrances to joy in religion. Sin indulged is of



course fatal to joy, because Christian joy is incompatible with a troubled conscience. Sometimes it is quite a little, and even an unsuspected sin which mars the happiness and hinders the joy, just as a little grain of dust will cause grievous irritation to the tender and sensitive surface of the eye-ball. These hindrances must be removed before we have any right to look for true Christian joy. Joy goes hand in hand with that peace which springs from "the answer of a good conscience towards God." Especially are secret and shameful sins, though only in thought and imagination, destructive of joy. Some complain that they find no happiness in religion, when the cause is plain enough. They dim the window of the soul by the mists and impurities of sinful thoughts, and then complain that there is so little light! Let them clean the window, and perhaps the sunshine may pass in.

I want now to point out that joy in religion is a trust for others, and not to be accepted selfishly. It is given us that our gladness may make others glad, that we may make the world a brighter and happier place at least to some others. Surely the highest and most beautiful type of Christian character is that of one who is simple, happy, serene, smiling ever on the world in its sadness (and the world does seem often very sad), not from any lack of sympathy, but in loving desire to cheer

the sorrow, and to shed a ray of light on the dimness and dreariness, which cloud so many lives. It is a Bible command to "rejoice with them that do rejoice." And is it not a Christian thing to be glad that others should be glad, even should we ourselves, if need be, be in heaviness? It seems to me that the fierce envy of happiness on the part of the Anarchists is one of the most horribly unchristian features of their temper and disposition. They revel in pulling down others from a happiness that is to them hateful, simply because it is not theirs. The true man will always rejoice to think of others being happier than himself, and will only aim at bringing happiness and contentment within the reach of as many as possible.

Can Christian joy be fostered and won? Yes; though not always. There are some naturally depressed and incapable of much joy. Sometimes the cause is purely physical, and it seems as if it were GOD's will that heaviness should endure for the night of this short life. But we will not quite forget that "joy cometh in the morning." Nor will we forget that CHRIST Himself passed through a darker chamber than any we have to enter, when He cried, "My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Should such be our lot, we will simply look up, and try to say from the heart, "Nevertheless, though I am sometime

afraid, yet put I my trust in Thee." But may we not enlarge the elements of praise in our lives? Could we not lift up our hearts more often in secret acts of praise to the FATHER of lights, from Whom cometh "every good and perfect gift"? Ejaculatory praise is as wholesome as ejaculatory prayer, and would surely help to increase our thankful realisation of GOD's goodness. Perhaps we do not sufficiently look out for mercies in our lives, and so we become dull-hearted and thankless. We may well pray, in the words of Archbishop Trench, for

"Strength to fulfil, in spirit and in voice,  
That hardest of all precepts—to rejoice."

Shall I not also remind you of the very tone and character of our highest and holiest service, the very name of which—"Eucharist"—tells of joy and thanksgiving? The communicant who enters into the spirit of heavenly praise which breathes in our glorious service, who responds in spirit to the "Lift up your hearts," and crowns his "sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving" with the angels' Thrice-holy, and the "Glory to God in the highest," will scarcely fail to win some share of the light and joy and peace which has been offered him as he has drawn nigh to his SAVIOUR in His Feast of Love.

Once again, then, I ask, What character is the

most lovely and the most CHRIST-like? Surely not that of one bowed down perpetually with self-tormenting fears and accusations; not that of one wilfully refusing to look out upon GOD's blessed sunshine; not that of one scarcely ever daring to be glad;—but rather that of one who, knowing sin, has known pardon through the precious Blood; who, seeing the hatefulness of self, has looked up and seen the beauty of GOD's love; who, acknowledging his utter unworthiness even to gather up the crumbs under the table, receives his FATHER's blessings as a little child would receive them; and who, humble, watchful, and self-distrustful, is nevertheless peaceful, bright, and even joyous—shedding around him, as he passes on his way, something of the gladness wherewith GOD has made him glad.

## XL

### Death

It is a very common popular delusion that religion is to fit us to die. Of course we know that it is, first of all, to fit us to live, and no doubt this popular delusion that religion is meant to prepare us for death encourages a delay which is too often fatal. Yet religion *is* to fit us for death too. It would be equally a mistake—perhaps it is a mistake which the present tone of thought and sentiment greatly encourages—to think of religion as *only* concerned with life. As some would put the “service of man” in place of the service of God, so some are eager to put the religion of this life in place of the religion of the life to come. All saints of God have thought much of death, prayed much about death, prepared much for death.

There is a body of Christians in this land, which owes its origin to Edward Irving, though somewhat presumptuously arrogating to itself the name of the Catholic Apostolic Church, one of whose principal tenets is the ignoring of death.

They teach that Christians should always be expecting the Coming of the LORD, and should look for it in their own lifetime. Now, this teaching is certainly founded on Scriptural truth, and is only untrue in shutting out other truths which are no less Scriptural. It is just another illustration of the well-known saying that all error is but partial truth. Undoubtedly the Christian is bidden in GOD'S Word to hope for, wait for, prepare for, long for—not death, but the Coming of the LORD. His hope is to bridge over the space between death and resurrection, and to centre upon the day which is to usher in the completed and consummated and perfected state of the risen life. But, none the less, the Bible does not ignore death. "It is appointed unto men once to die." "To me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain." It is right to hope and long for the Coming of CHRIST. It cannot be right to shut our eyes to the fact that, as "in the midst of life we are in death," so it is most probable that we shall ourselves, all of us, "pass through the grave and gate of death."

We will then meditate upon Death for a little while.

Death is a very solemn and awful subject; yet not a very gloomy one. If it shrouds the brightness of the sky with a cloud, yet the cloud is all suffused with the glow of hidden light. No

doubt it will be regarded differently by different temperaments, but it ought not to be very terrible to any.

1. I think our first point must be the *awfulness* of death. Setting aside all the incidents and accompaniments, what a *very* solemn thing must ever be the passing from the known to the unknown, from time to eternity! Goethe, not believing in any beyond, spoke of our seeing only

“Solemn before us,  
Veiled, the dark portal.”

To the man without faith in another world it must be full of misery to contemplate the parting with all familiar things. Even to the believer it is a very solemn thought. To see no more the walls of the room, and the flowers in the garden, and the trees and fields, and, most of all, the dear home faces;—but, instead, what? Ah, that is the awe of it. Who can tell? What will it be like? Some could have told us, such as Lazarus, the widow's son, and Jairus' daughter. Possibly it was not permitted them. Surely the disembodied spirit must be keenly sensitive, strong, living, free. There must be some sensations corresponding to bodily sight and hearing. The dead thief must have *seen* Jesus in Paradise, or have possessed some spiritual sense equivalent to seeing. Some will doubtless remember Newman's

wonderful endeavour to picture the sensations of the disembodied spirit in his "Dream of Gerontius." The very difficulty of forming any conception of what it will be is full of awe. It must be full of awe to sail forth into that unknown ocean, to pass into a region we cannot understand, cannot picture to ourselves now.

Then the circumstances and conditions of death are full of awe. From many things all shrink naturally. Pain, sickness, distress, helplessness, the being burdensome or trying to others—from such things, which are so often the prelude to death, it would be unnatural not to shrink. GOD does not ask this. It is no sign of special fitness to die to have no shrinkings from death. Many of the French Revolutionists, who scoffed at all religion, died seemingly without a fear. Many saintly men have sorely dreaded dying. Much depends on temperament. We must expect some awfulness in death.

2. Next let us think of the *blessedness* of death. It is blessed in what it ends. There is no more sin, making us tremble at the thought of GOD's justice; no more temptation, making us afraid of our own feeble purpose and unstable will; no more infirmity, marring and spoiling all our best endeavours; no more failure, making us almost give up in despair; no more ignorance;



perplexing us with vain questionings and cruel uncertainties.

It is blessed in what it begins: the rest, for all the toil and care and weary strife is over; the peace, for there is a great wondrous depth of calm there; the light, for surely in God's light we shall see light, and there must be floods of beautiful knowledge to pour around the soul when the trammels of this narrow dimness are no more; the joy, for it is the pledge and foretaste of the "Enter thou into the joy of thy LORD."

Roman Catholic writers seem always to ignore the difference between Paradise and Heaven, and, save in so far as affected by their conceptions of a Purgatory, speak as though death were the gate of Heaven. Perhaps the antechamber itself—the Paradise of God—may be so beautiful and blessed that it may be not unlawfully spoken of as Heaven itself. Yet we cannot forget that the Bible teaches us that the "Enter thou" is spoken on the great Day of the LORD, when the end of all things is come, and the dead are raised in incorruption, and changed into the image of their LORD.

3. Then there is the great Judgment. "After this the Judgment." Whatever accesses of light and knowledge there may be in the disembodied state, or whatever dealings there may be with the spirits of the departed, plainly (so far as is revealed

to us) death ends our time of probation. We are judged according to our works in this life. This truth is declared again and again. Of course there is another truth to be set side by side with this, taking away its terrors and awe—the truth, I mean, that “the Blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin.” Even under the old covenant GOD could say, “I am He that blotteth out as a thick cloud thy transgressions, and as a cloud thy sins.” And yet it is written, “GOD shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.” The whole record of each life lies open before Him. Each—each act and word and thought has its record, and contributes towards the final sentence. Aye; but it may be that one of these acts which thus go to the framing of the final sentence is the going of the sinner in lowly penitence to the Cross of CHRIST and winning pardon through the precious Blood. Nevertheless *the Day* is at hand. And “no man knoweth the day nor the hour.”

In meditating upon death it is well to try to realise it—to think of it as coming to oneself. How many sudden deaths we hear of! Imagine it coming to you by some accident, or by a sudden stroke, or even by a rapid illness. Think of yourself as face to face with death. We clergy ought to have no difficulty in representing it to

ourselves. We see it often enough, though possibly the very familiarity may blunt us to the awfulness. I have twice at least been very near death: once in a very serious illness, when the bodily weakness seemed to destroy all power of thought, and in looking back upon it I could not remember being conscious of anything very definite; and once by drowning, when the desperate battle for life absorbed at the time all powers of mind and body. I have not thought much of the chances of a deathbed repentance since those experiences. But suppose you could be calmly conscious of the approach of death, that you could know it to be very close, would it make you very happy? would JESUS be very dear to you then? would it be like falling asleep in His arms? Among all the solemn thoughts of that most solemn hour, do you think a flood of glorious joy would pour into your soul, and lift it nearer to GOD, ere it took its flight? It is hard to answer these questions. Yet one thing is certain: the only way to ensure death coming to us as an angel of good tidings is so to live as always to be fit to die. Then, when the hour comes, it will be as though a voice whispered, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

A holy death is indeed a beautiful gift of GOD.

We will pray to be able more and more truly

to say, "To me to live is CHRIST, and to die is gain."

I will end with the well-known evening prayer of Bishop Andrews:—

“ Day is fled and gone,  
Life too is going,  
This lifeless life !  
Night cometh,  
And cometh death,  
The deathless death !  
Near us is the end of day,  
So too the end of life.  
We, then, also remembering it,  
Beseech of Thee,  
For the close of our life,  
That Thou wouldest direct it in peace,  
Christian, acceptable,  
Sinless, shameless,  
And, if it please Thee, painless ;  
LORD, O LORD,  
Gathering us together  
Under the feet of Thine Elect,  
When Thou wilt, and as Thou wilt,  
Only without shame and sin.  
Amen.”

## XLI

### Concluding

*(For Holy Communion—the Last Morning)*

THIS Retreat must send us back to do better work, both personally in our own inner life, and pastorally in the care of souls—better men and better priests. It has been an opportunity of advancing for which we must give account. I trust we have all made resolutions for both these ends, and sought for power from above to keep them. We have come this morning to our Master, and have laid our resolves at His feet. They are registered in heaven. And now He sends us forth again with new hopes, new longings, new zeal, new purposes, new strength and grace, to new trials, new labours, new temptations. Perhaps it will be harder than before. We are setting ourselves a higher standard; so it must be harder. And there will most likely be reaction. We cannot always be on the Mount of Transfiguration, or at the foot of the Cross. We are still the poor, weak, helpless, ignorant, un-

stable men we were before, and we shall soon find it out. Disheartenment and discouragement, more or less, are sure to await us. Well, we can bear that, and more, I hope, for CHRIST.

Shall we take with us one little thought of strength? For myself I will ask it, and I think I may in the name of each one ask it of all the rest. We will each one remember in our intercessions this little band of brothers, who have prayed together, and knelt together at the same altar, and sought together a closer union with our dear LORD.

Shall we converse with Him for a few moments ere we part? Perhaps He would thus speak to us.

*The Voice of the Good Shepherd.* "If any man will come after Me, let him take up his cross daily and follow Me." My son, art thou ready to bear thy cross for Me? It hath been printed on thy brow; wilt thou print it on thy soul? If I call thee to track My steps on a rougher, steeper path than thou hast trodden as yet, art thou ready? If I ask thee to give up some little portion more of ease or time to Me, to expend some little more of effort and self-denial, art thou ready? If I bid thee deal more sternly with thyself, curb thy natural heart with tighter rein, mortify thy natural inclinations with more resolute persistence, art thou ready?

*The Voice of the Under-Shepherd.* O my Master, I am indeed resolved to follow Thee. But I am so weak, so inconstant, so easily daunted, so soon wearied, that I tremble and am afraid. I have so often resolved and then failed; started and then turned back; taken up my cross and then laid it down. Oh! dare I hope this time to persevere?

*The Voice of the Good Shepherd.* "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." But, O My son, I have yet another charge to lay upon thee. Behold I send thee forth to bear My Cross among men. "I am the Good Shepherd: the Good Shepherd giveth His life for the sheep." And thou too art a shepherd of souls. Wilt thou give *thy* life for the sheep? Art thou only a hireling, fleeing because thou art a hireling, and carest not for the sheep—fleeing from toils, and perils, and pain, and persecution? Shall I give all, and wilt thou give nothing? "Feed My lambs." "Feed My sheep."

*The Voice of the Under-Shepherd.* O Master, I desire to give my life in labour and self-denial for Thy sheep. Yet I love ease, and I dread what is hard and painful. I much fear that my old slackness and lukewarmness and indolence of spirit will come back to me. Teach me, O my Master, to love the souls of the flock even as

Thou hast loved them. Make me willing to spend and to be spent for them. Yea, make me so to labour and to love that, when Thou comest, I may give my account with joy, and not with grief.

*The Voice of the Good Shepherd.* "Peace be unto you : as My FATHER hath sent Me, even so send I you." "Feed My lambs." "Feed My sheep." "Lo ! I am with you alway, even unto the end." Amen.



# THREE ADDRESSES

*Given on a "Quiet Day" for Bishops in  
Lambeth Chapel*

I. THE LIFE

II. THE TEACHING

III. OUR INFIRMITIES



## XLII

### I.—The Life

I THINK I never had laid upon me before a task which so filled me with dismay, and all but despair, as that which in simple obedience I am undertaking to-day. At first I kept crying out in my secret heart, "O LORD GOD, behold, I cannot speak, for I am a child." It seemed so impossible to put together one sentence of counsel, or to cast into words one thought, which I dare utter before those at whose feet I would so thankfully have sat to learn. Then I remembered to have read of Edward Irving, that his preaching seemed vain and fruitless, until he one day resolved that thenceforth he would set himself among his hearers, and preach only to his own soul. And then he began to help others. I must try this plan. In no other way could I open my lips. And if I do speak to my own soul to-day, it will be very simple things that I shall speak. I have nothing else I *could* speak. I know nothing but very simple things. But I *do* know that I need very simple things myself. Perhaps others do.

I cannot tell. For myself, the busy outward life; the constant occupation of my diocese; the ceaseless round of services, sermons, addresses, meetings, committees; the daily task of correspondence—all these, leaving so little time for thought and study and prayer, do seem to dry up (at least in part) the springs of the inner life, and to hide from the soul (at least in some measure) the simpler aspects of personal religion. It may be the same with others upon whom lies the tremendous responsibility of momentous public action, or the necessity for grappling with questions which touch the very ground and foundation of our faith, or the duty of defending the inherited doctrines and the historical position of our Church, or the blessed privilege of interpreting for the unlearned the hidden wealth of meaning which lies in the storehouse of God's Holy Word. We are all men—all sinful men, all men with our personal individual relation to God, all with souls to be saved, all with sins to be forgiven, all with hearts that are meant to love, all with spirits that are meant to worship. And of such sort are what I mean by simple things. Perhaps they are not really simple in themselves, but simple by comparison. At any rate, they are primary things and momentous things. Yes, there are at least some things in which a bishop is not so far removed from a little child just learning to believe

in GOD, or a poor convert from heathenism just wondering at the old story of the Cross. I do not think we want quite always “ἀφιέναι τὸν τῆς ἀρχῆς τοῦ Χριστοῦ λόγον.” At any rate, it is well sometimes to come back to it, and to make sure that the foundation is well and firmly laid. I do not feel as if *I* had to come back very far to find myself at the starting-point.

But how humbling it is to find great saints still holding themselves beginners! See how the aged bishop St. Ignatius, condemned to martyrdom by wild beasts in the Roman amphitheatre, and rejoicing in the honour thus conferred on him by his LORD, writes to the Ephesian Church from Smyrna, when just about to start on his journey, “Νῦν ἀρχὴν ἔχω τοῦ μαθητεύεσθαι”; or to the Romans, in a letter written while on his way, in yet simpler and most touching words, “Νῦν ἄρχομαι μαθητῆς εἶναι.” I do not think *we* need be ashamed to be beginners.

St. Gregory in his Pastoral Rule treats of four things: (1) “How each one comes to the height of his authority;” (2) “Coming to this duly, how he liveth;” (3) “Living well, how he teacheth;” and (4) “Teaching rightly, with what care he daily taketh note of his own infirmity.” Perhaps this outline may somewhat guide our thoughts to-day. We may put aside the first head, which is concerned with the motives, qualifications, and

preparation for the work of the pastor. But the *life*, the *teaching*, and the *infirmities* of the shepherd of souls may very well suggest profitable lines of meditation. I propose in this address to speak of the *life* of the bishop.

St. Gregory begins this section by declaring that the bishop (I shall venture to use the word 'bishop' on this occasion in quoting St. Gregory, although he himself uses various words, such as *præsul*, *rector*, *pastor*), in his life, must go before his people, even as a shepherd goes before his flock. And then he sums up his view of the bishop's life in these words: "He must needs, therefore, be pure in thought, chief in action, discreet in silence, profitable in speech, a close friend in sympathy to every one, wrapped in contemplation most of all men, a companion of well-doers in his humility, quick in righteous zeal against the vices of evil-doers, not lessening his love for things within through occupation in things without, nor neglecting the provision of outward things in his anxiety for the things within." I hardly think we could ask for any description of that which we should be in our lives more comprehensive than this.

I would take note that St. Gregory goes to the root of the matter. His first words are "*pure in thought*." Yes, he knew where the fountain is of which the life is but the stream. If the

fountain is sweet, the stream will be sweet. If the fountain is bitter, the stream will be bitter. "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." What the heart is, the man is. We have been taught lately, with a clearness and insistence which have given fresh depth and power to an old truth, that "*the inner life is the only life*"; that "the conduct is not the life"; that "the life is something infinitely deep within, deeper far than conduct, deed, word, thought"; and "that it is life only with which CHRIST deals, leaving it to produce and regulate all else."<sup>1</sup> Ah yes, if the heart were perfectly right with GOD, we need not be over-anxious about the life; that would follow. I once heard a clever person denouncing motives, and arguing that the scrutiny, and even the consciousness, of motives tended to make a man morbid, self-conscious, little-minded, slavish, unnatural. I am afraid the person I refer to rather kicked against restraints of any sort; but there is a sense in which such language may convey a deep truth, for one master-motive, if of sufficient power and embrace, would truly govern all the life, and make the constant scrutiny of motives in the separate acts and words superfluous. Is not this the real force of that glorious saying,

<sup>1</sup> From Archbishop Benson's "Christ and His Times," ch. iii.

“Love is the fulfilling of the law”? or, as I have heard it expressed in less hallowed form, “Love GOD, and do what you like”? We may regard the momentous importance of the inner life in another way. We believe that GOD, Who is everywhere, yet does touch, move, guide, strengthen us, in some deep, mysterious, yet very real way. We believe that the HOLY SPIRIT, Who is GOD, does dwell in us and sanctify us. But what does that HOLY SPIRIT touch and help? The outward act? The spoken word? Does the Spirit of GOD move the hand that does a kind act, or hinder the hand that would do a cruel act? Does He frame within the lips the word that helps and teaches and comforts another, and shut the gate against the word that would wrong, or tempt, or pain? Nay, we know that it is that inner life, the inner man—call it what you will, heart, soul, or spirit—which GOD deals with. *He purifies the fountain.* Is there any other way of making the life what GOD would have it? Shall we leave the secret heart, the inner man, undealt with, and just strive to order and regulate all the tumultuous crowd of acts and words and thoughts as they troop by? Will that succeed? In my Shropshire parish there was a small hamlet through which ran a little stream of water used by the people. Typhoid fever broke out in that hamlet, and we had, if I remember aright, sixty



cases in a population that could not have been treble that number. The evil was readily traced to the water, which was found to be polluted by leakage from a farm-yard a little higher up. Should we have been wise to insist on the people filtering or boiling every drop of water they used for drinking? I think we did a much better and simpler thing. *We went higher up the stream,* and brought the water to the hamlet from its pure source; and we had no more fever. We want to get far enough back. We want to remember that religion has its seat, not in the eye, not in the tongue, not in the hand, not in the outer man, but in the heart. That is the place where all the springs and motives and energies of the man reside. That is the place where GOD promises to dwell. That is the place where the HOLY SPIRIT exercises His sanctifying power. "Make the tree good and his fruit good." Oh, let us—no, let GOD—keep the fountain pure!

I dare say I have given to St. Gregory's words—"pure in thought," "*cogitatione mundus*"—a larger scope than was in the mind of the writer. I think by his remarks on these words in the subsequent chapter he was regarding that purity which is opposed to all sensual uncleanness. Dare I say, *That* at least has nothing to do with us: we may pass that by as a topic that concerns us not? Oh, pardon me, pardon me—nay, be angry

and indignant with me, if you will—while I ask such questions as these: Are our thoughts—our most secret thoughts—guarded against the entrance of every least unclean imagination? Is there never any scarcely-conscious pleasure in the remembrance of impure things? Is the eye guiltless? We know by how many avenues the dark, shadowy forms of evil will steal into the soul. Are we watching each approach? Is no gateway ever left unguarded? Is there really no need for us to listen to the counsel which bids us “cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God”? “*Perfecting holiness*”—it is a strong expression. Was it not to a bishop thus an Apostle wrote, “Keep thyself pure”? And did not that Apostle write also of himself, “I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway”?—to which text the saintly Bishop Wilson appends these words:—

Εἰ δὲ Παῦλος τί ἂν εἴποιμεν ἡμεῖς;

Oh! to live ever in the conscious presence of Him Who is as on the negative pole of the magnet to all that is not wholly pure! If we would banish unworthy guests from the soul, it must surely be by letting Another occupy the room. If only we realised His presence, how could we

ever admit visitors who would be displeasing to Him? Yes, it is CHRIST dwelling in us Who must make these souls of ours meet to be indwelt by Him.

But this is the secret of that larger purity of heart and thought which is the spring of every holy life. If CHRIST dwell in our hearts by faith, those hearts will be cleansed, not alone from every defilement of unclean thought and imagination, but from all that renders them unfit for that holy presence. They will be equally purified from pride, indolence, unreality, selfishness, worldliness, ambition. The heart will become as a gushing fountain parted into many streams flowing down the many avenues of life; all pure, translucent, vivifying; all bearing the character of their source; all telling of the secret spring of purity and holiness from whence they flow.

I am not careful to touch upon the varied paths of ministerial activity, or to enumerate the multiform duties and occupations of a bishop's life. It has seemed to me better to get back to first principles, and to deal with the inner forces which must govern all the outer life. We are much marked, much criticised, much judged by the world around. Oh, that all that meets the eyes of men were the simple reflex of the pure heart within! Nay, I would say something better

than that, though a thing to make one tremble, —would that all our outer life spoke to the world of *Christ* within—of “CHRIST, Who is our Life,” our hidden Life, our deep true Life! It is a thing to make one tremble. It is such a tremendous mystery. I know so little about it. I have no psychological explanation of it to offer. I cannot understand it. But to any one delivered from the horror of blank materialism, how full of strange mysteries must this inner life always be! How many things, which nevertheless he holds as primary truths, are incapable of scientific explanation! How many mysteries, for which his consciousness supplies him with sufficient evidence, can never receive their solution here! This—the union of CHRIST with the soul—is only one of many mysteries. It is presented to us in varied language. Sometimes it is CHRIST coming to us, formed in us, dwelling in us—or simply *Christ in us*. Sometimes it is we who are “in CHRIST,” as in some Divine atmosphere in which our being expands to its true measure and dignity. One day we bow before the strangely gracious promises of the abiding presence of the LORD with His Church and people, recorded by the beloved disciple. Another day we ponder the fulness and multiplicity of blessing for those who are “in CHRIST,” as set forth by St. Paul in the opening splendour of the most heavenly of

all his Epistles. Now all is spoken directly of the Second Person of the ever-blessed Trinity; and now it is through the operation of the Third Person that the indwelling takes place and the union is effected. What does it mean? Our poor, cold, dry, unloving hearts know so little of it experimentally. Our feeble, shallow understandings are so incapable of reducing it to any logical formula. And yet it is *there*—a truth, a reality, a fact of the spiritual world;—no dream of an over-wrought enthusiast, no word-painting of Oriental imagery; but a reality which Faith accepts, if with trembling awe, yet with a thrill of secret exultation. And He is the Light of the world. But He is *our* Light—Light *in us*, Light which must shine *through us*, Light which we must *reflect*. For in the night of this earthly life, ere yet the Sun arises in His splendour, the lesser lights must shine with borrowed light. And He Who in the Court of the Temple cried, “I am the Light of the world,” spake also and said, “Ye are the light of the world.” “O Dayspring! Splendour of the eternal glory, and Sun of righteousness! come and enlighten those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death.” Yea, come shine in these dim, dull hearts of ours, that “in Thy Light” we may “see Light,” and, seeing Light, may shed abroad some reflected rays of the Light that is in us. Crown our life, as we pass

on our way through the mists and darkness of this world, with some radiance from the inner shrine, some effluence of Thy hallowing presence, so that we may not only serve CHRIST, and love CHRIST, and follow CHRIST, but that we may *live Christ*, and that at the least men may "take knowledge of" us that we have "been with JESUS."

## XLIII

### II.—The Teaching

FOLLOWING again the guidance of St. Gregory, I propose to take up his third head, and to ask concerning the bishop, "Living well, how he teacheth." And here I shall part at once from my guide, for, as will be remembered, St. Gregory's third part is one long dissertation on Christian Casuistry, showing how the bishop should deal with and speak to persons, classified in a great variety of character and circumstance. I would rather, as in dealing with the life, go to principles, and leave the details to be governed and regulated by such principles, especially as it would be wholly impossible, on such an occasion as this, to follow the writer into his long and exhaustive catalogue of special cases.

The first thing I would do is to link on this address with the last by saying that the bishop's first teaching must be *by his life*. "*Pasce verbo ; pasce vitâ ; pasce sanctarum orationum fructu,*" writes St. Bernard — a sentence which was, at my request, engraved on the beautiful

Pastoral Staff presented by the Laity to the Diocese of Wakefield. It is very instructive to find St. Paul saying to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, "Take heed unto *yourselves*, and to all the flock"; and to Timothy, "Take heed unto *thyself*, and unto the doctrine." Before the flock, before the doctrine, comes *thyself*. Yes, for no pastoral energy, no soundness of teaching, will do much apart from holiness of living. The living of the life speaks more loudly than the vocal word; aye, and has more power to command obedience. It is not our LORD's precepts, I suppose, which most deeply impress, but His character. It is not "*Be ye* meek and lowly in heart" that holds the spell, but "*I am* meek and lowly in heart." Biography does more to form character than books of moral essays. Is not this one reason for the fourfold picture of the Gospels, so wondrous in its simplicity of detail? It is just a holding up of CHRIST in all the beauty of His infinite holiness, that we may look, and be like Him. "We all, with open face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the LORD." It is the great law of influence. If we ask ourselves whence we have won any good that is in us, I think we shall most of us acknowledge that we have won it more from good persons than from



good books. And before passing from the thought of how this law of influence has acted, and does act, upon ourselves, may we not glance onwards for a moment, and ask what is our hope for hereafter? To be like JESUS—to awake up after His likeness—to bear the image of the heavenly. Yes, but how? What is to be the process of assimilation? “We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is.” Oh yes! It is not the vision only that we hope for. To see the King in His beauty—that will be very glorious. But it is more: it is the *transforming* vision—the *transforming* vision! “We shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is.” That is the crown and consummation of the process which is going on, however feebly and imperfectly, here. As we look unto JESUS, as we contemplate and study His perfection, we are “changed into the same image,” only by degrees—“from glory to glory,” by such stages as the Spirit of the LORD may accomplish in us. And then we turn to those before whom *our* lives are lived and *our* words spoken. And our example must, in its turn, teach and influence others. Holiness is a sermon without an end, and yet that wearies not. A holy life is always preaching. The lips may not be eloquent, nor the thoughts ready, but simple, truthful, humble words, backed by a holy life, will win souls for CHRIST. Gold-

smith says of a holy priest, "Truth from his lips prevails with double sway." St. Jerome writes, "A holy simplicity is mightier than unsanctified eloquence." Bishop Wilson says, "More sinners have been converted by holy than by learned men." I will venture to illustrate this method of teaching by recalling Ary Schoeffer's well-known and exquisite picture of Dante and Beatrice. The heavenly guide is leading on the earthly disciple, who from a lower level gazes up with reverent earnestness to her face, while *her* eyes, full of calm and tender light, are fixed, not on him, but on heaven.

But we are sharers of the prophetic office. It is our duty, as it is our privilege, to be teachers—yes, and even teachers of teachers. Shall we stir our consciences to some deeper sense of our responsibility in this matter by listening to the ideal of the episcopal office as drawn by the saintly Nicholas Pavillon when shrinking from the acceptance of the See of Alet, pressed upon him by his superiors? "What anxious days, what sleepless nights, must that faithful shepherd endure, who, knowing the nature and extent of his pastoral office, devotes his life and powers in the spirit of willing sacrifice to fulfil it. A good bishop must indeed be prepared for a life of heavy care, of weary watching, of unceasing labour, to guide the wayward, to

restrain the wandering, to seek the lost. What depth of love must he bring to such a task! What patience! What gentleness! How large a measure of the spirit of his Heavenly Master must fill the soul of him who would venture upon such an occupation! And how awful to contemplate what the result must be if patience should fail, and love grow cold, and if other aims and objects should divide the attention. Will CHRIST easily lose those for whom He gave His precious Blood, the souls so dear to GOD? And will not His anger burn when at the last great day it shall appear that, through the carelessness of those who ruled His household, and their love for temporal things, so many souls have perished, who, had they been carefully tended, might have shone as the stars in heaven? And what hope can they have of sharing the glories of the Redeemer's kingdom, by whose negligence there has been less joy in heaven, because sinners have not been converted, GOD not glorified, the people not instructed, and heaven not filled? In that great day, when pastor and flock shall together appear before the judgment-seat, how will the careless shepherd bear to hear the reproach of Him Who gave His life for the sheep, when, finding so many wanting, He shall say in the prophet's words, 'Where is the flock that was given thee, thy beautiful flock?' "

I do not know whether any of us are tempted to magnify the special duties and responsibilities of the episcopal office so as to shut out of view those of the priestly order. I can quite see the danger. I can quite understand how the cares of ruling, charging, counselling, ordaining, confirming, with the multitude of difficult matters which are almost daily claiming the time and thought of a bishop, may very naturally fill the field of view, and cause the more ordinary duties of the parish priest, in teaching the ignorant, leading the fight against besetting sins, fostering reverence and devotion in worship, and the like, to be regarded as scarcely a bishop's province. Yet, in becoming bishops we did not cease to be priests. We are *συνπρεσβύτεροι* with our clergy. And it seems to me those duties which we undertook when called to the priesthood are still ours, not to be wholly delegated to others, but to be performed so far as GOD may give us strength and opportunity. The life of that good man whose words I have read to you is full of the sense that he is chief pastor of the flock — not ruler and guide and teacher of the clergy only, but before all things friend and guide and teacher of the people. Nicholas Pavillon was not of our Communion; but the good Bishop Wilson was no less strenuous in asserting the responsibility of the bishop for pastoral ministrations to the whole flock. *The*

*souls of the diocese are our charge.* A parish priest trembles as he thinks of the charge of thousands of souls. What shall *we* do with our hundreds of thousands?

“Living well, how he teacheth.” I think, next to example I would put sympathy as an essential of true and worthy teaching. No doubt sympathy is in some measure a natural gift, but it is also a Christian grace. I suppose the secret of sympathy is the being able to put yourself in the place of others, to feel what they feel, think what they think, understand what they understand. I am sure this power can be cultivated and greatly enlarged by practice, and we shall do well to show our clergy how much efficient preaching really depends upon constant intercourse with their people. The true preacher is in touch with his hearers; that is only saying that he preaches with sympathy. He feels instinctively what will go home to them, what they can comprehend, what they need and long for, what thoughts are engrossing them, what problems are perplexing them, what troubles are weighing upon them, what difficulties are hindering them, what weaknesses are unmanning them, what sins are enslaving them. And so all he says is real. Oh, how often it is all unreal, at least to the hearers! It floats away over their heads, and never touches heart or understanding. I have known an honoured

dignitary of the Church preach a graceful academic sermon to an immense congregation of working people, and a drover said to me afterwards, "That gentleman missed his chance." I have known a learned bishop charge a number of poor rustic children at a Confirmation upon the patristic authority for the laying-on-of-hands, and I am quite sure they could not understand a word of what was said. I have known many preachers using abstract ideas, and forgetting that people live in the concrete; discussing questions of doctrine, seemingly unconscious that the very terms they employed were but empty sounds to all but a very few who heard them; pursuing lines of reasoning which scarcely one in the church was competent to follow. What was at the bottom of all this failure, and of the failure of thousands of sermons every Sunday? Chiefly, I have no doubt, want of sympathy, inability on the part of the speaker to put himself in the place of the hearer. If only we could be more conscious of our hearers than of ourselves! Mr. Angell James, the devout Nonconformist minister, used to say, When you look on your congregation from the pulpit, imagine that behind every up-turned face is an undying soul needing your help.

Closely akin to sympathy is the necessity for making allowance; and this chiefly for two things, ignorance and prejudice. I really do not think

we often gauge the profundity of the ignorance of our people concerning the truths of religion; we take a great deal too much for granted. It may be hard to teach people exceedingly simple things directly without offence, but much can be done indirectly. I always feel I owe a debt of gratitude to a brother-bishop, who, before I was myself consecrated, urged me never to let a Confirmation pass without saying a few earnest words to the general congregation as well as to the Confirmation candidates; and I never have, and hope I never shall. But, besides this, I believe we have in our Confirmations the opportunity of teaching great numbers, who come as scarcely more than sight-seers, the simplest elementary things concerning their souls—of course I mean indirectly in our addresses to the candidates. Then as to prejudice. Do we make allowance enough for the ignorant mistakes which have grown up with so many of our people, and the slowness with which false or one-sided notions are unlearned? Do we always recollect how very gradual was the process of the formation of our own opinions, while we expect our people to accept our view, and to put aside their own, for the asking? I think we lack at times the patience which will teach slowly and carefully, and the considerateness which will not hurry over-much. The flock are often young and tender, and “if

men should overdrive them one day, all the flock shall die."

You will gather, my brothers, that it seems to me a duty, not alone to preach on great occasions or for special objects, not alone to handle great subjects of vast moment to the Church at large, though we thank God for those amongst us gifted with power to do this great service, but also to speak, as and when we may, to the less cultured of our people, of the great primary truths of personal religion. I have from the first declined to preach for the objects for which offertories are collected on my visits to the churches of my diocese, feeling I was more likely to help such by being unfettered in my choice of subjects, and better doing the Master's work if I went simply as His ambassador, bearing His message to the souls He died to save.

Is it not well in visiting a parish to ask to speak a few manly, earnest, affectionate words to the men, who will come in numbers at such a special invitation, and whom we long to see in greater numbers in our ordinary services? There is such a danger of our work, or at least the work of the Church in our dioceses, becoming too feminine. Yet, where their pastor really cares for them, really enters into their trials and difficulties, really sympathises with them, honestly faces the rough questions and rude arguments



which they are familiar with, the men are ready enough to come. We can encourage such dealing with them.

And then there are the children. Is our work too engrossing, are our duties too momentous, to allow of our caring much for these little ones of the flock? Lo! JESUS takes them up in His arms and blesses them! Oh no! It will surely be a high privilege from time to time to speak for the loving FATHER to these young, happy, generous, trustful souls, who so quickly answer to the touch of love. It is not very difficult to get at children's hearts. But it will not be only in the set service and special address in GOD's house. Surely the faithful bishop will concern himself very closely with the Church education of his diocese, both in the week-day and in the Sunday schools. We are making everywhere a great fight for our Church day-schools. Let us at least see that they are worth fighting for. If the bishop shows a real interest in the schools, the clergy will not lag behind. I learnt my lesson of the momentous importance of our day-schools, and of the necessity of making our teaching in them regular, thorough, and systematic, from good Bishop Short of St. Asaph. It is a lesson we may well hand on to others.

I have touched on but a very few of the numberless things that rise up for utterance when

one deals with the question, How the bishop teacheth? It has seemed to me presumptuous to say these things to you, my brothers, to-day. You will forgive me, I know, in your goodness. I am continually saying to myself what St. Gregory says at the end of his book, "*Pulchrum depinxi hominem pictor fœdus.*" Well, we will pray, as we kneel in silence for a little space, that we may exercise our prophetic office more to God's glory and the saving of souls; that we may teach as those who are taught of God; that we may make known to our people the truth as it is in JESUS, and that our teaching may be ever a Gospel of glad tidings to the ears that hear.

## XLIV

### III.—Our Infirmities

ST. GREGORY's fourth head is this—"Teaching rightly, with what care (the bishop) taketh note daily of his own infirmity." To this head he gives a very short chapter, occupied entirely with warning against pride and self-satisfaction.

I will venture to suggest two little questions, the honest answers to which will, I think, be a sufficient antidote to pride and self-satisfaction. They are simply the questions which it is wholesome to ask ourselves on a day like this:—

1. What is the state of my own soul?
2. What is the fruit of my ministry?

If I want to humble myself utterly, I take one command, which touches at once and profoundly the state of my own soul—"Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart." It is a terrible command to test oneself by. All my heart! Oh, if I only dare believe I loved GOD with half my heart, or a tenth of my heart! Why, sometimes I think I do not love Him at all! And the worst is, I can love others: I am

not simply cold, insensate, passionless; I am not bereft of the power of loving. Only, when it is a question of loving GOD, then all seems so cold and dry and poor. I know the love of GOD must be something more spiritual, more unemotional, perhaps less sensible, than the love of any human being. I suppose we may take some comfort from the thought that GOD does not endow us with the wealth of human affection that we may give that affection back to Him, but that we may expend it upon its proper objects. I have known a mother sorely troubled because she could love her little child so dearly, and could not love GOD in the same way; and I have comforted her by telling her that her mother's love was given her to give to her child and not to GOD. I know also that in His infinite graciousness the SAVIOUR gives us the test of obedience wherewith to prove our love. When He says, "If ye love Me," He does not add, 'be all in a glow of fervent affection,' but "keep My commandments." And yet I know also that love *is* an emotion; that obedience, if the fruit and the test of love, is not itself love—nay, it is very easy to understand obedience without love. And if a purely emotional religion is a wretchedly feeble, unreal, unsubstantial thing, a religion without emotion is a no less wretchedly hard, dry, barren thing. I cannot explain away the command, "Thou shalt

love." I cannot make it mean anything less than that GOD asks of me a conscious love—that I am bound to love GOD, and to know that I love GOD.

Well, it is humbling enough to have to deal with this question of love to GOD as regards our own separate personal relations to GOD. But we have to *teach* love to GOD; we have to speak of it to others. And I am sure I have often spoken very unreal things. I once had a great lesson in this matter. It was many, many years ago, when I had to preach an Assize sermon, and chose for my subject, "Love the Fulfilling of the Law." I spoke of various degrees of love, and said the highest and best love was to love GOD for His own loveliness. The judge (who has been long dead) asked me very kindly in the carriage as we left the church, whether I really thought we could here on earth love GOD purely for His own sake, as the angels doubtless do. He said he had read and thought much on the subject, and had come to the conclusion that our love to GOD, while here on earth, must always be mainly gratitude. Whether he was right or wrong, I learnt at least this lesson—not to talk about things I did not understand, or profess familiarity with regions I had never explored. Yet we have to teach love; and does it not sometimes seem like asking a block of ice to kindle the fire of heaven?

Then, again, what a wonderful fervour of de-

votion has the love of GOD grown to in many of the saints of GOD! It is not the disciple who leaned upon JESUS' breast who cried, "My soul is athirst for GOD, yea even for the living GOD. When shall I come to appear before the presence of GOD!" "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." But since CHRIST came, how has the theme of love to GOD filled the thoughts and the mouths of His truest servants! The words of St. Augustine will not be quite unfamiliar to most: "Not doubtfully, but with assured consciousness, do I love Thee, O LORD. Thou hast stricken my heart with Thy word, and I have loved Thee! But what do I love when I love Thee? Not the fair face of nature, nor the beauty of the seasons, nor the bright light so dear to these eyes, nor sweet melodies of various songs, nor the fragrance of flowers and odours and spices, nor manna and honey, nor any earthly good." . . . "Only in Thyself can we find Thee. Oh! too late have I loved Thee, Thou primeval Beauty! Too late have I loved Thee!" And the centuries roll by, and to the quiet cloisters of Rivaulx, in the hidden Northern valley, the saintly Elred flees from the rude distractions of the Norman Court, and, disciplined in the stern Cistercian rule, composes the "Mirror of Love." And again the centuries roll by, and a pious widow in a Shrop-

shire village, spending as much as five hours daily in prayer and devotional reading, one day in my presence, after a little silence, clasped her hands together, and exclaimed, "Oh, how I *do* love GOD!" Is this not enough? Then we will listen to the words of one who may humble us the more because he is not of our Church:<sup>1</sup> "Do we wish to know what we love—what occupies the chief place at the bottom of our hearts? Let us see what is the *habitual subject of our thoughts*. The holy priest from his waking moment thinks of GOD without any effort, blesses Him lovingly, consecrates himself entirely to His service. . . . As his heart is, so to speak, filled with GOD, he constantly thinks of GOD, and works for GOD without intermission. So passes the day, and so passes all the life of this holy man; he is always thinking of GOD, because GOD never ceases to be the sole object of his love."

Shall I set that picture by the side of my own miserable coldness and not be ashamed?

But I will dare to go further. If I really loved GOD, even very imperfectly, should I not love *prayer*? I like speaking to those I love. Prayer would surely be fuller of delight, or at least of calm satisfaction, if it were the utterance of love. Yet are not my prayers sadly cold and uninteresting? Am I never glad when they are said, per-

<sup>1</sup> The Abbé Dubois; from "Holiness to the Lord," p. 99.

haps with decent attention but no fervour, and I can rise and betake myself to something else? Is not intercession generally the part of my prayers into which I can best throw my heart, because in it is the indirect consciousness of the love I have to those I pray for? And lo! it is told of St. Philip Neri that "sometimes he was heard, as he lay prostrate on the ground, to cry out, 'Enough, O LORD, enough! Withhold a little, I beseech Thee, the torrent of Thy sweetness.' At another time, 'Depart from me, O LORD, depart from me. I am yet a mortal man, and unable to bear such abundance of heavenly joy.'"<sup>1</sup> I do not know what this means. It speaks a language of which I have not learnt the alphabet.

But oh, how it all humbles and abases! Pride, self-satisfaction! are they conceivable?

This last Easter week (1891) I had a letter from a curate in my diocese, who wrote: "The past holy season has been one of great refreshing to me. I cannot remember the time that I have enjoyed GOD more. I felt JESUS so near to me the night before Good Friday that I could hardly drag myself from my knees. The memory of the SAVIOUR'S agony was so vividly present to my soul that it was one o'clock before I went to bed, and I passed the whole of Friday in the church."

Another Easter I received a letter from a vicar

<sup>1</sup> From Alban Butler.



who was ill. In it he wrote: "Easter Day in bed! Well, I have been praying with yearning earnestness, and I am not sorry to have been ill. The things of GOD have been very vivid to me, and I think the effect will last."

Well, in my humiliation I find one gleam of hope and comfort. If it does seem hard to love GOD, Who is Spirit, and Who in the pure essence and infinite majesty of His being is so far from us, His feeble earthly creatures, yet it does not seem quite so hard to love GOD Incarnate—GOD revealed to us in human form as brother-man. Is it not one end and purpose of the Incarnation that we may have a nearer Object of Love? To love JESUS does seem more within the narrow limits of our power. And yet again I am ashamed and abashed. Let us see. We will try to imagine ourselves on that wonderful day by the Sea of Galilee when the risen SAVIOUR met so mysteriously His expectant disciples. The mystic feast is over. They feel a strange awe at the as yet scarce avowed presence of their Master. He singles out one. Let me imagine it myself. He fixes on *me* that yearning, piercing gaze. He speaks. It is just the little question we have heard so often, "Lovest thou Me?" Oh, how shall I answer? Dare I appeal to His omniscience? Dare I say, "'LORD, Thou knowest all things: Thou knowest that I love Thee'"? I

know I have seemed cold and heartless and heedless of Thy love. I have done many things that look as if I hated Thee instead of loved Thee. I have denied Thee, been ashamed of Thee, forsaken Thee. Yet, O LORD, Thou knowest all things. Thou canst read my heart. Oh, surely there is some love still hiding there! Yes, "Thou knowest that I love Thee." I do not know whether I may say this or no. But sometimes I like to fancy that if I were laid aside by some sickness or infirmity, and knew I should do no more active work for Him, and all this busy life faded away into the background, and I had only to think, and remember, and prepare, I might find the love not quite gone out, and *He* might fan it up into a little flame, in the light and glow of which I might look up with a smile, and whisper, "Thou knowest that I love Thee."

And now, what is the fruit of my ministry? That is the second question to humble us and make us take note of our own infirmity. What fruit should we first look for? I suppose our close and intimate relations with our clergy open to us the first and most obvious opportunities of making our influence felt for good. Our clergy in these days (thank God!) are for the most part earnest, hard-working, faithful men. I am not forgetting that there may be parts of the land in which this is not so fully the case as in others.

I have heard a bishop of a large Welsh diocese lament over the deteriorating influences of lonely scattered parishes, with little or no wholesome society, and not enough to do. But our worst enemies cannot deny that there is a wonderful change for the better among the clergy; and I do not think there are many of us who will not humbly acknowledge that we have among our clergy, men whom we look up to as teachers and patterns to ourselves. But, taking our clergy as a body, are we not bound to do all in our power to deepen in them the spiritual life, and make them more and more men of God? Have we, then, done this? Or ought I first to ask, Are we the men to do this? Our clergy may be moral, worthy, diligent, successful, and yet may be lacking in spirituality. And I think it is not in any vain, boastful spirit that we are conscious that a few simple, earnest, loving words from a father-in-God are treasured and thought over, and are sometimes fruitful in blessing. I am not thinking so much of any direct exhortation, as of a tone and spirit in our conversation which shall show that the deeper things of the spiritual life are present to our thoughts. We tell our clergy as they go about among their people to remember that they go as shepherds of the flock. Do we always tell ourselves as we go about among our clergy to remember that we

go as shepherds of the shepherds? Do we really try to make them a godly, spiritually-minded, unworldly ministry? Do we never visit a parish, and see something of its clergy, without having really said anything to help them to rise to a higher conception of their holy office?

Then there are those most momentous opportunities afforded us in our Ordinations. I suppose all bishops in these days make a point of having their accepted candidates with them in the Ember seasons for special devotional preparation for their Ordination. Their hearts and thoughts are full of the approaching day. They are in the mood to be deeply impressed. They long for counsel, help, encouragement. Do we make the most of these precious occasions? The loving advice given in the daily addresses, the more searching words spoken in the personal interview, the simple prayer alone with the young candidate, the solemn fatherly blessing, these are things never forgotten. These with the frequent services, especially with the daily celebrations of Holy Communion, are things that mould and form the man. And here I feel constrained to say one thing which it is a pain to say, but which I cannot leave unsaid. The previous life and surroundings of many of our candidates have not been such as to fit them for their holy work. It has been a revelation which has filled me with

anxiety, to learn from some more godly student what a spirit of laxity, to use no stronger word, pervades some of our special places of preparation. I believe in our greater Universities, together with the manifold loosening of ecclesiastical ties, there has, by God's grace, grown up a very real and deep religious spirit, yet we cannot take it for granted that a candidate who comes with a University degree has necessarily come under any very deep religious influence. And I am sorry to say a course at a theological college does not always imply this any more surely. Thus the opportunity given us in the Ember week may be of infinite importance. Have we always recognised this? Have we always done all in our power to make the few days of preparation, days for which a young man may thank God for ever?

But we are not bishops of the clergy only. There are the laity—the people. Perhaps I need not say much about our godly laity. But I will ask, Are we always full of sympathy for them, whatever their views? Do we always encourage them, make a point of speaking a few earnest words to them, seek them out, take trouble about them? There is often a churchwarden, or even a sexton, in a church we visit, full of the love of God, and who would be very much encouraged by a little word and shake of the hand. Might

we not after a Confirmation always ask at least that any members of the choir who have just been confirmed may be brought to us for a shake of the hand, and a whispered "God bless you"?

But what shall be said about the godless and indifferent? Have we no duty to them? Have we no part in the seeking and saving of that which was lost? What have we done? Have we started or fostered any evangelistic enterprises? Have we sought, or gladly availed ourselves of, opportunities of speaking to such as will not come within the Church's gates? Have we ever shrunk from the teaching of the necessity of conversion for sinners? Have we ever been content to be polishing the shafts and carving the capitals of our temple, while we have left to others, as less congenial work, the hewing of the rough stones out of the quarry?

Then there are the special and obvious vices of our people—drunkenness, impurity, gambling. What have we done to combat or lessen these? Have we ever given up our own refined tastes and cultured sensibilities to strike a blow for God in regions full of hateful things, which it is pleasanter to ignore than to deal with?

Oh! there are so many spheres of action in which it is surely good for us to ask, What is the fruit of my labours? I shall only touch upon two more.

There is the desolating wave of unbelief flooding our land, and shaking many troubled souls. What have we done to stablish the doubting, to withstand the onrush of the flood, to secure or restore to our people the priceless blessing of a sure and steadfast faith? Have we cared to know? Have we tried to understand? Have we thought, and prayed, and laboured? Have we shown poor troubled souls that we know their trouble, and try to help them? Or have we shrunk from all this, because it is difficult and troublesome?

And, lastly, there are great questions stirring the minds of men in these days, which the Church cannot afford to pass by or put aside. I do not think it wise at any time to pose as political partisans. But social questions, labour questions—these lie outside party politics. The Church is bound to interest herself in all that concerns the welfare, even the temporal welfare, of the people. She is bound to use her influence, if she can secure any, in the discussion and solution of these questions. She is sufficiently out of touch now with those who are eagerly, even if sometimes ignorantly, seeking what they honestly believe to be some better conditions of life and labour. Yet among the leaders of these movements are very able men, very moral men, and very religious men—alas! very few Churchmen. But have we tried to make friends with them, to understand

their aims and ideas, to sympathise with what is good, and true, and generous, while we point out what is selfish, or unjust, or impracticable? It is not the Church's duty to decide difficult and intricate questions, which only experts can really master. But it *is* the Church's duty to teach great principles of justice, and honesty, and unselfishness, and charity. Have we any fruit to show of our labours in these things?

Well, I know not how any of us can take an honest survey of our work, any more than we can of our lives, without deep humiliation for our many shortcomings. If such survey move us to deeper penitence, it is well. If it move us to more strenuous efforts, it is better. Self-searching and self-knowledge are very humbling, and it is good to be humbled. But we will pray GOD that out of our humiliation may spring new hope and new endeavour. And we will lay down both our sorrow and our hope, our self-abasement and our resolutions, at the foot of the Cross, and plead for acceptance and a blessing through the merits and mercies of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Amen.



# FOUR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOLY COMMUNION

- I. THE COMMUNION
- II. THE COMMEMORATION
- III. THE PRESENCE
- IV. THE LIFE



## XLV

### I.—The Communion

1 Cor. x. 16: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?"

HOLY writers describe the progressive stages by which the Christian man rises upwards as he advances towards the goal. There is the life of penitence, in which the sin-stricken soul mourns, and confesses, and cries for mercy. There is the life of sanctification; in which the HOLY SPIRIT is conquering the evil in the natural man, and enabling him to fulfil the righteousness of GOD's law. And there is the life of union, in which the spirit of man is drawn into blessed union with his SAVIOUR and his GOD. The first and second of these three stages are most fully drawn out in the latter part of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The third stage can be more completely understood by the study of such passages as our LORD's great intercessory prayer in the seventeenth chapter of

St. John, or His great sermon on the Bread of Life in the sixth chapter of the same Gospel. Now these three stages, though progressive, and meant to pass from one to another, are never quite distinct and separate. You cannot mark them off by a dividing line and say, 'Here one stage ends, and another begins.' They often run more or less parallel with one another. As we strive to mount, there will be foreshadowings and foretastes of the higher life beyond ; and as we climb higher, there will be memories and recallings of the earlier stages we have passed. See how in the midst of the profound outpouring of penitence in the 51st Psalm there well up here and there, as from a hidden fountain, voices of joy and gladness. See how in the splendid outburst of praise in the 103rd Psalm there are not wanting verses which dwell on sin, and pardon, and mercy. It is so in our lives. We are a strange mixture. Yet through all we recognise that the highest end and aim must be union with our dear LORD. It was for this He was Incarnate and entered into our nature. It was for this He gave us the two blessed Sacraments, the one the initiatory seal, the other the continual cementing of that blessed union.

Union with JESUS ! The very words make one afraid. What ! I so dead, and cold, and unloving, and unspiritual, can I be called to so

close a fellowship, so fearful yet so blessed a nearness, as union with my SAVIOUR must imply? Even so. Alas! in my utter sinfulness and unworthiness it often seems to me that the only thing I dare cry is, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O LORD." Yet, "with the LORD there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption." And I know that it is only *in Him* that I can find pardon and salvation, and so, O my JESUS, I would open my soul to Thee. It is a poor, cold, sin-stained, sordid place. Yet, "a broken and a contrite heart, O GOD, Thou wilt not despise." Thou hast promised to dwell "with him that is of a contrite spirit." And I do repent. Yea, LORD, I repent: help Thou mine impenitence. It is Thy presence I crave, even while I dread. It is union with Thee I desire, even while I tremble. I want Thee, O JESUS; I want Thee closer, closer still. I want Thy Godhead, that I may be strengthened with Divine life and power. I want Thy Manhood, that I may grow up into Thee in all things, and that Thou mayest be formed in me.

But lo! JESUS speaks. Listen. "He that eateth My Flesh, and drinketh My Blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." Can it be, LORD? Can it be that Thou hast provided a way by which I may the more surely enter into this blessed union? I look again at the old, old words. I ponder

what my SAVIOUR said when He took the bread and blessed and gave, saying, "This is My Flesh," and when He took the cup, and blessed it, and gave it, saying, "This is My Blood." I meditate upon the wonderful teaching of the great sermon in the synagogue of Capernaum. Does any one say, 'This cannot be spoken of the Holy Sacrament, because it was uttered a year before that Sacrament was ordained'? Then turn we to the next chapter, and lo! "In the last day, that great day of the Feast, JESUS stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink. He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake He of the SPIRIT, which they that believe on Him should receive. for the HOLY GHOST was not yet given, because that JESUS was not yet glorified." If this saying could be thus prophetic, why not the other? Nay, I cannot doubt that when, a year later, in the Upper Chamber at Jerusalem, the disciples watched their Master, as He took bread, and said, "Take and eat, this is My Body," and took the cup, and blessed it, and said, "Drink ye all of this, for this is My Blood," they must have felt how light was streaming upon the mysterious words they had found so hard; they must have thought, 'Ah, now He is showing us a way in which to fulfil the strange and startling injunction

to eat His Flesh and drink His Blood.' It seems to me wholly impossible to dissociate that discourse at Capernaum from a sacramental interpretation. I do not say it has no other wider interpretation, but I am sure the disciples could not help applying it to the new and holy rite in which the words used are so strangely the same. I ponder this. And then I turn to the words of the Apostle who had received of the LORD in some special and personal revelation that which He delivered to His disciples, and again it is the same. It is the eating and the drinking in which the blessing and the gift are found. "The cup which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST?" In the partaking of the hallowed elements we partake of CHRIST. In this one precious verse lies the whole doctrine of sacramental union with CHRIST. We are given nothing more, and we ask nothing more; it is enough. We eat and drink in faith, and lo! we are partakers of CHRIST. His precious Body and Blood are ours: all the past self-oblation, all the present living power. We win the efficacy of the atoning Sacrifice; we are joined to the Humanity of the Son of GOD; we receive the pledge of redeeming Love; we enter into the life of our living LORD. "Then we spiritually eat the Flesh of CHRIST, and drink

His Blood ; then we dwell in CHRIST, and CHRIST in us ; we are one with CHRIST, and CHRIST with us." "Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of GOD !" "Thanks be unto GOD for His unspeakable gift." Well, asks Richard Hooker, "why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful communicant but this : O my GOD, Thou art true ; O my soul, thou art happy !'

Do we yearn to know more ? Do we ask, like the people in the synagogue at Capernaum, "How can this Man give us His Flesh to eat ?" We make answer, GOD has not willed to tell us. It is a great though most blessed mystery. We solve it not by invention of a miraculous change, and a supposed philosophic distinction between essence and accidents. We solve it not by stripping it bare of its mystic significance, and declaring that it is but a pictured memorial. We were taught in our Catechism that the Body and Blood of CHRIST are "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper." And we bow in lowliest humility. It is even so. This is what Holy Scripture teaches. This is what the specially inspired Apostle sets forth as the faith of the Church. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST ? The bread which we break, is it not the Communion of the Body of CHRIST ?"



We are content. We will not seek to know where God has not willed we should know. It is enough to believe that our souls are fed with this Divine food. The manner of the feeding we ask not to understand. Is not mystery needful for true reverence? Might not the grace of reverence be somewhat tarnished and spoiled if all were made quite plain and clear? Is it not better to veil the face like the seraphim, and to adore where we may not know? Perhaps God would, as it were, cover us with His hand as He passes by, lest we should see more than it were good for us to see, and be either over-much afraid or over-much elated at the unfolding of the inner mystery. Perhaps I may here quote a very remarkable passage from the writings of the great St. Athanasius. He is commenting on St. John vi. 62—"What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" and he writes thus: "He spoke of the Ascension of the Son of Man into heaven for this reason, that He might draw away" (His hearers) "from a fleshly conception, and, farther, that they might learn that the Flesh He spoke of was heavenly food from above, spiritual nourishment given by Him, . . . as though He said: That which is shown forth and given for the salvation of the world is the Flesh which I wear. But this Flesh and the Blood thereof shall be given by Me as food

spiritually. So' that this Flesh is spiritually distributed to each, and becomes to all a safeguard unto the resurrection of eternal life."

O LORD JESU! we cast ourselves before Thee in our sinfulness and in our ignorance. Who are we that Thou shouldst come to us? We are not worthy that Thou shouldst come under our roof. Our poor souls faint by the wayside for the Bread of Life, and oftentimes we know not that we are dying of hunger. Oh! feed us, blessed JESUS; feed us with the living Bread; feed us with Thyself. Lo! we come to Thee. "We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under Thy table;" yet we come. Thou hast said: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out." Oh, I believe! Even now Thou art stretching out to us Thy holy hands of gracious welcome. Even now we catch the echo of Thy blessed invitation, "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will refresh you." And we dare to come. Nay, we cannot stay away. Oh! make the cup of blessing which we bless to be to us the Communion of the Blood of CHRIST; make the bread which we break to be to us the Communion of the Body of CHRIST; for Thine own mercies' sake. Amen.

## XLVI

### II.—The Commemoration

St. John xiv. 6: "No man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me."

THERE on one side is GOD in all His majesty and holiness and justice; and here on the other side is my soul in all its littleness and sinfulness and guilt. And the gulf seems so vast and impassable! Yet, unless I can cross it and come to GOD, how am I to be saved? But I hear a voice crying, "I am the Way. No man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me." And lo! a bridge spanning the awful gulf. And then hope springs up, and I venture nearer. One of old said, "Take with you words." What words shall I take? Have I anything to plead? Have I any excuse to make for my sins? Have I any merits to set against them? Nay, the more I know of myself—the more I realise what I am, the more I set this sin-stained soul of mine in the piercing light of GOD's purity, the more I endeavour to forestall the verdict of eternal justice—the more I stand dumb and dis-

mayed. How dare I, the sinner, approach GOD, the righteous? And again the voice cries, "I am the Way. No man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me." And wilt Thou take me, then, O LORD? Wilt Thou lead me by the hand while I cross the gulf? Wilt Thou hold me up and plead for me, and win me favour in the presence of the all-holy GOD? And He seems to speak again—"O halting, doubting, trembling soul," I think I hear Him say, 'wherefore did I take to Myself thy human nature and become the Son of Man, save that I might stand as Mediator between GOD and man, and might bring man back to GOD? Is not My Incarnation the pledge of thy acceptance? Am I not even now wearing the very Body of My Manhood that I may be the new Head and Representative of the human race, and as Man may plead for man, and offer evermore before the throne the merits of My atoning Sacrifice?' And hope and courage come into my heart. I look up. I take with me words. I am no longer dumb and dismayed. I have found a ransom. I shelter myself in the righteousness of the great High Priest, Who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." He "offered up Himself" once upon the Cross. He "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven

itself, now to appear in the presence of GOD for us." - And so the way is open, for *He* is the Way. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of JESUS, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh, and having an High Priest over the house of GOD, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith." And I dare to draw near. I lift up my voice and cry, 'O GOD, I am a sinner, and chief of sinners. I am as dust and ashes in Thy sight. I have nothing of my own to plead. But I plead the all-precious Sacrifice of Thy dear SON. I come to Thee, my FATHER, by Him. He is the atoning Sacrifice, and He is the great High Priest. He died for us on the Cross. He intercedes for me above. And I "come boldly unto the throne of grace."

"For lo! between our sins and their reward  
We set the passion of Thy SON, our LORD."

And it is surely here, in this holy service, this blessed commemoration, that we chiefly plead the everlasting merits of the all-prevailing Sacrifice. We make memorial before GOD. We offer before Him the merits and Sacrifice of CHRIST as our only plea. Of course it is also a memorial before man, the acted representation of the great

self-oblation of the Son of GOD. We show the LORD's death till He comes. We proclaim it to sluggish hearts and thoughtless minds. It is the Gospel message pictured to the eye. But our holy service looks Godwards. We speak to GOD. Our very Consecration is a prayer offered to GOD, and not a proclamation made to man. The priest stands as the spokesman and representative of the people, and gathering up their priesthood in himself, lays all before GOD—their sins, their penitence, their cries for mercy, their trust and hope in CHRIST, their pleadings of His merits alone, their thanks and praise and adoration. It is as though he said, 'O holy FATHER, we dare not draw nigh save through the everlasting merits of Thy dear SON. We have no plea to offer save that of His once-offered Sacrifice, which we here plead and commemorate before Thee. We are nothing; He is all in all. Oh, accept us in Thy Beloved! Let His merits and His intercessions prevail for us.' And, as our faith stretches out the supplicating hand to the very SAVIOUR Himself, we cry—

“Nothing in my hand I bring,  
Simply to Thy Cross I cling.”

Ah, yes; is not our whole Communion Office just one great expansion of “through JESUS CHRIST our LORD”? Through Him we seek for mercy;

through Him we offer every prayer; through Him we approach the mercy-seat; through Him we find our way to heaven.

“Lift up your hearts.” Yes; these words give the keynote to the spirit and tenor of our service. We want the wings of faith to rise within the veil, and there to see the great High Priest standing as our Intercessor, pleading His all-prevailing Sacrifice for mankind. His very Humanity pleads for us, for is He not the representative Man, Who, as Man, wrought righteousness for man? His very wound-marks plead for us, for do they not tell of sacrifice and atonement? There is no other intercessor by His side; He stands and pleads alone.

“Thy years, O God, can never fail;  
Nor Thy blest work within the veil.”

And we ask, O great High Priest, to hide ourselves beneath Thy priestly robes. We would shelter ourselves under Thy protecting presence. We would offer our poor unworthy prayers only in the power of Thy prevailing intercessions. We would ask Thee to take our feeble, graceless worship and to offer it for us with the “much incense” of Thine own most precious merits. It is only “*in Thee*,” as one with Thee, as taken up into the embrace of Thy boundless love, that

we dare to draw nigh. We come to the FATHER by Thee.

“Look, FATHER, look on His anointed Face,  
And only look on us as found in Him.”

It is right to take note that neither in Holy Scripture nor in the teaching of our own Church is the commemoration before GOD, on which we have been meditating, made so intimate and essential a part of the blessed Supper of the LORD as is the actual participation of the hallowed elements. Perhaps we may say of this aspect of Holy Communion, as we may also say of the doctrine of the Real Presence of CHRIST in His Sacrament, which we shall make the subject of our next meditation, that it is in reality a part of a larger and more comprehensive truth, as indeed I tried at the beginning to show. The larger truth is that which affirms that we can only come to GOD through CHRIST and in the virtue of His atoning merits and Sacrifice. Whenever we approach GOD, this must be our plea. But as we do approach GOD most truly in this holy rite, coming to the FATHER by CHRIST, coming with a newness and directness of approach such as belongs to no other act of our spiritual life, so do we here most truly and efficaciously plead before GOD that SAVIOUR's merits, making commemoration of the all-holy Sacrifice of the Cross,



and having access to the FATHER, yes, and “boldness to enter into the Holiest by the Blood of JESUS, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His Flesh.” I hope to show you in my next meditation that it is the same with the Presence—that the great truth, so largely insisted upon in GOD’S Word, of the special, though spiritual, presence of CHRIST with His people necessarily gathers itself into fullest force and blessedness when brought to bear upon the Holy Sacrament.

As we kneel, then, in our blessed and holy service, we will try to realise that we are coming unto the FATHER by CHRIST; that we dare not and could not come with any other plea for acceptance; that in doing this in remembrance of CHRIST we are not alone stirring up our own minds by way of remembrance, but also making memorial before GOD of the atoning Sacrifice; that the human priest, who stands as the spokesman and representative of the people, gathering up in himself, as it were, the priesthood of the people, only dares to offer the worship—the lowly confession of sin, the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, the holy and lively sacrifice of ourselves, our souls and bodies—through the merits and intercession of the great High Priest.

Let this, then, be our prayer: ‘O GOD most holy, I come before Thee unclean, unholy, chief

of sinners! Look not on my sin, O GOD, but look upon the Sacrifice that was offered to take away sin! Behold, before Thee I would plead the Offering once made for the sin of the whole world. I have nothing else to plead. I have no offering of my own to bring. The Sacrifice of Thine own dear SON—that is my plea. Oh, cast me not out, but accept a poor sinner for the sake of the Sinless One! Amen.'

## XLVII

### III.—The Presence

St. Matt. xviii. 20: "There am I in the midst of them."

ONE of the primary and necessary attributes of GOD is that of Omnipresence. However dim and unworthy our conceptions of GOD, the idea of Omnipresence always forms a part of them. And it seems to follow from the conception of GOD's Omnipresence that we cannot really be any nearer to Him at one time or place than at another. So that when expressions are used which imply greater or less nearness, such as "Draw nigh unto GOD, and He will draw nigh unto you," they must be understood as spoken after the manner of men. *We* can, and do, *realise* GOD's presence and nearness more at one time than at another, and the consciousness of His presence and nearness is like an approach of the soul to GOD.

BUT JESUS CHRIST is GOD—perfect GOD, as well as perfect Man—and so endowed with all the attributes of the Godhead; and of course

among these is Omnipresence. Can we then speak of Him as more present, or present after a different manner, at any time or place than at another? Certainly He Himself speaks of coming to us, and of being in the midst of those gathered together in His Name; so that, though it may be essentially true that He is equally present everywhere, there must be a sense in which His presence is at least more blessed, more realised, more brought home to the soul, at one time than at another.

Shall we then meditate a little while to-day upon the presence of CHRIST in His blessed Sacrament?

Certainly, if where two or three are gathered together in His Name, there He is in the midst of them, this promise, whatever it implies, must be most perfectly fulfilled when His disciples are gathered together in the holy act which they do in obedience to His solemn command, "This do in remembrance of Me." And if He says, "I am the Bread of Life; he that cometh to Me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on Me shall never thirst: I am the living Bread which came down from heaven; if any man eat of this Bread he shall live for ever"; and again, "He that eateth My Flesh and drinketh My Blood dwelleth in Me and I in him": it is plain that some very real and true presence is contemplated by the

Divine Speaker. It would be mockery to talk of eating Him as the Bread of Life, of dwelling in Him and He in us, of being one with Him and He with us, if there were no special life-giving presence. And whether these words of our LORD have a wider meaning than their sacramental one or not, yet it is hard to understand how CHRIST could impart Himself without being, in some special manner, there. Of course we know that "the Body of CHRIST is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." And His presence in the Holy Sacrament is "only after an heavenly and spiritual manner." But that it is real and true and blessed, do not let us doubt.

O my SAVIOUR! Thou art surely present in power and in love; present to pardon our sins past; present to heal the sickness of our souls, and to bestow new grace and strength; present to quicken our souls with the life which Thou hast in Thyself, and which Thou givest to Thine own; present to feed our fainting souls with the Bread of Life, which is Thyself; present to join us to Thyself in a thrice-blessed union and fellowship. We will not doubt. LORD, we believe; help Thou our unbelief. Oh! these poor, dull, dim-sighted, world-blinded hearts of ours! Thou comest still to Thine own, and Thine own receive Thee not; Thou standest among us, and we

know Thee not; Thou art waiting patiently at the door, and we open it not. Forgive us, dear LORD, forgive us, and open our eyes that we may see. Make Thyself known to us, as in the chamber at Emmaus, in the breaking of bread.

I cannot go on, as some would go on, to define, and limit, and localise the presence of my SAVIOUR. There is much language used which seems to me to be quite unauthorised, whether by Holy Scripture or by the teaching of our Church. But I am not here to judge. It may be that in these sacred mysteries to deny is as perilous as to affirm. And I dare not intrude into what GOD has not revealed. I am content to believe that my LORD is present in power and in love in His Holy Sacrament; that He is with us as the true Priest Who pleads His own eternal Sacrifice for us; that He gives the true Bread of heaven; that He imparts Himself to the faithful communicant. But if He is in any sense specially present, He must be adored and worshipped as present. The soul must be conscious of His nearness to it. We must pray to and praise One Who is in the midst of us. Oh, for the eye of faith to be open to realise His blessed, awful presence! Oh, for the simple reverent heart which will exclaim, 'My LORD is here; let me bow before Him and worship Him as my GOD and my King!' For we are not worshippers of a

dead CHRIST, but of a living. Our faith does not only pierce the long centuries of the past, and cast itself down at the foot of Calvary: it listens as He cries, "I am He that liveth, and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore." I know that in that wonderful letter which the fathers of the Nicene Council sent out with the Nicene Creed as issued by them in the year 325, they speak of the Lord's Supper thus: "As to the Divine Table, let us not unworthily fix our thoughts on the Bread and Cup before us; but, lifting up our hearts, let us by faith behold the Lamb of GOD, which taketh away the sins of the world, lying on that Table; and truly partaking of His most worthy Body and Blood, let us believe that these are the pledges of our resurrection." We do not forget the Sacrifice; but we think of Him Who was sacrificed, and Who still bears in His sacred Hands the marks of the wounds wherewith He was wounded in the house of His friends. We do not forget that He was once led as a lamb to the slaughter; but we worship, with the angelic hosts, the Lamb that was slain. We do not forget that He died as our atonement; but we know that our Redeemer liveth, and that He liveth to make intercession for us. So too St. Augustine, commenting upon our LORD's words in the synagogue of Capernaum, in which He says, "The flesh profiteth nothing; it is

the Spirit that quickeneth," paraphrases the passage thus: "Understand spiritually that which I have said: It is not this Body which ye see that ye are about to eat; nor are ye about to drink that Blood which those who will crucify Me are about to shed. I have presented to you a Sacrament. Spiritually understood it will give you life. Although it is necessary it should be visibly celebrated, yet it must be understood invisibly." Surely the spirit and tenor of this, and other such passages of the older writers of the Church, is that of the "Sursum Corda"—"Lift up your hearts." There is no defining, no localising. Let me quote some wise words of Bishop Harold Browne, which will be found in his discussion of the 28th Article in his invaluable book on the Thirty-nine Articles. He writes thus: "The doctrine of a real spiritual Presence is the Anglican doctrine, and was more or less the doctrine of Calvin and of many foreign reformers. It teaches that CHRIST is really received by faithful communicants in the Lord's Supper, but that there is no gross or carnal, but only a spiritual and heavenly, Presence there; not the less real, however, for being spiritual. It teaches, therefore, that the bread and wine are received naturally; but the Body and Blood of CHRIST are received spiritually." He then proceeds to quote from the learned Bishop Jeremy Taylor as



follows: "The result of which doctrine is this: It is bread, and it is CHRIST's Body. It is bread in substance, CHRIST in the Sacrament; and CHRIST is as really given to all that are truly disposed as the symbols are; each as they can; CHRIST as CHRIST can be given, the bread and the wine as *they* can; and to the same real purposes to which they were designed; and CHRIST does as really nourish the soul as the elements the body."

GOD help us all to realise the intense spirituality of that act which is bound up, by CHRIST's own ordering, more than any other act of worship, with outward form and circumstance. GOD teach us all more of that devout and holy reverence which becomes the consciousness of the presence of the LORD. Surely we should strive to be more like those six-winged Seraphim whom Isaiah beheld above the throne on which sat the LORD high and lifted up. You will remember how "each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly." I think the folded wings are emblems of awe and reverence, as the outstretched wings are of ready service. And we too would draw near, very reverently, very lovingly, very devoutly. We would find in our holy service the memorial of the Death of CHRIST, and the channel of the Life of CHRIST. We

would commemorate before GOD and man His past work, and look up to JESUS in adoring love for His present work for us in heaven. But He is no dead CHRIST, and He is no absent CHRIST. He is our living and our present LORD—living to plead, present to bless. And as we bow down in His presence, trembling, yet trusting; all sinful and unworthy, yet knowing Whom we have believed; not worthy to gather up the crumbs under His Table, yet knowing that the Blood of JESUS CHRIST cleanseth from all sin; scarcely daring to approach, yet finding in Him the Way;—we will venture to whisper in our secret hearts, “My Beloved is mine, and I am His.” Amen.

## XLVIII

### IV.—The Life

Gal. ii. 20: "I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me."

I DREAD picturing, or attempting to picture, such a life as should be that of the faithful communicant. It is so high, so holy, so pure, so heavenly; yes, but (worst of all) so far above and beyond my own experience. Yet, if we have come here with any distinct aim and purpose, it is surely to fashion to ourselves a high ideal, to grasp some clearer conception of what we might be by the grace of GOD, and of what we mean to try to be. I am sure that a high ideal, a lofty standard, is good for us, even if we never reach far towards it. It is good for us to have a point to aim at far above our worthiest attainments, that we may be ever striving upwards, and, while humbled by the consciousness of continual failure, may yet be fired with the ambition to gain some higher point than we have yet attained to. "Forgetting those things which are behind" — counting them no more worth remembering than the Alpine climber

counts the little height he first reached in the early morning hours, as he stands, after long and toilsome climbing, on some splendid ridge, and gazes on the dazzling summit, to reach which he is putting forth all his powers—"and reaching forth unto those things which are before," we shall "press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of GOD in CHRIST JESUS." You will not think, my brothers and sisters, that he whose privilege it is to point you upwards and onwards, and to speak to you of a life lived very near to CHRIST, dares to do this because he has himself had experience of these higher regions and more heavenly mountain-summits. He would simply set himself with you, and ask you to look up with him, and try to frame to yourselves some conception of that life of which GOD's Word tells us as the life of one living very near his LORD. Surely this should be the aim of those who have tasted of the heavenly Food, who have entered into the shadow of the great eternal Sacrifice, who have bowed themselves in the blessed presence of their Redeemer and their GOD. Let us then meditate a little this morning on the life of the true and faithful communicant, as GOD holds it up to us, that we may each one be humbled at our distance from it, but may long, and resolve, and labour, and pray, to gain some approach to our ideal.

1. It is a life of *consecration*. Every time we draw near to the Holy Table of the LORD we offer and present ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Him. Yes; but this act in its very nature stretches out to cover the intervals between. It is not like the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, which is complete in itself, and, though often repeated, does not directly govern the intervening periods. This sacrifice of self would be utterly hollow and meaningless if it ended with the words spoken, even though spoken honestly at the moment. To offer yourself as a sacrifice means to give yourself wholly to GOD, to make over to Him your soul and body, your intellect and your emotions, your will and your powers, your life and yourself, to be His, not for a passing hour, but continuously. I am afraid there are a good many people who are constantly giving to GOD and taking back again. Shallow, fickle, unstable, they say the sacred words of self-oblation, possibly at times with a feeble intention and purpose, and then pass lightly back to their old selfish, worldly, indolent lives. Is this a sacrifice? Can any one look upon such and say, "These lives have been given to GOD"? Surely, if there is any reality in the self-oblation, the life must consciously belong to GOD. "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify GOD in

your body, and in your spirit, which are GOD's." Oh! that miserable folly which would draw a great line down the life, and put on one side of it our religious duties—Prayer, Bible-reading, Church-going, Holy Communion; while on the other side is set the daily life, with all its interests and occupations, its work and its pleasures, its buying and selling, its eating and drinking; as though these two classes of things *could* be kept apart. Why, if the religious life fails to interpenetrate the secular life, it is a terribly poor, shallow, worthless thing. If religion is anything more than a mere idle name, it will govern the whole life: all things, little as well as great, will submit to its sway. The sacrifice of self will be a life of consecration.

2. It is a life of *union with Christ*. It must realise the "Not I, but CHRIST liveth in me." I spoke of this union in my first address; let us meditate upon it for a few minutes more to-day. It is truly so high and heavenly a matter that we may well take off our shoes from our feet as treading upon holy ground. And I am always afraid of two things in treating such exalted themes. I am afraid first of unreality, that is, of speaking words which have no true counterpart in the heart and life—words which are supposed to be true and proper, nay, perhaps even words which are the simple and most natural

utterances of saintly souls, but which speak of regions one has never oneself visited or explored. GOD forgive us if we are ever thus unreal! No doubt it is well to know that there are heights we have never scaled; but let us be very honest and truthful in speaking of very high and heavenly things, and do not let us speak as if we had been caught up into the third heaven when we do not know the road to the first. The other thing I am afraid of is discouragement. I think when we read, or hear, or preach about the faultless pattern of JESUS, some do feel, 'All this is beyond me, too high, and too unearthly.' And so when we speak of a life of union with CHRIST, it is the same. Are there none who whisper to themselves, 'I wish I understood it. It seems to float above my head, and not to touch this poor, ignorant, sinful, earthly life of mine, and I am disheartened. Though I stretch up my puny hand, I cannot reach this high and lofty thing.' Ah, poor fainting soul, we will look up together and see. Yes, the far-off glittering sunny summit is beyond our feeble strength. But we may be pressing upwards nevertheless. Shall we sometimes, as the hours go by, think of JESUS, and His presence with us, and His love to us? In a little mid-day prayer; as we pass into a railway tunnel, and our reading is for the moment interrupted; as we go to visit some poor sick brother

or sister, longing to speak for Him; as we lie awake upon our beds before we sleep; as we awake to morning consciousness;—shall we try to think He is with us? Shall we just say silently, ‘O my JESUS, let me realise Thy presence and Thy love’? Then surely we may take courage. It may not be much; there may be many heights beyond, which we have not yet attained; but this is to take JESUS into our lives, and to know at least the sweet beginnings of the life of union with Him.

3. Then thirdly, the communicant’s life must be one in which *the power of the Holy Spirit* is recognised and known. Do we sufficiently realise the manifold actings of God’s good Spirit? See how GOD’S Word ascribes all holy and blessed influences to Him. It is He by Whom we are all baptized into one body. It is He by Whom we are all strengthened and confirmed in the Laying-on-of-hands. It is He Who, invoked according to the ancient Liturgies, and still silently invoked (we doubt not) by the secret prayer of GOD’S people, blesses and hallows the sacred elements, so that they may be to us as the Body and Blood of CHRIST. It is He by Whom comes the conviction of sin, and the grace of repentance. It is He Who sanctifies. It is He Who enlightens. It is He Who helps our infirmities, and teaches us how to pray. All paths that lead us away from



sin, and that guide into the way of peace, are His. And we worship the HOLY GHOST as GOD. We cry, "Come, HOLY GHOST, our souls inspire, And lighten with celestial fire," for "Such as the FATHER is, such is the SON, and such is the HOLY GHOST." "The FATHER is GOD, the SON is GOD, and the HOLY GHOST is GOD. And yet They are not three GODS, but one GOD." Perhaps, if we realised more clearly the power of the HOLY GHOST, we might ourselves be stronger to live to GOD. You will no doubt have observed how wonderfully St. Paul brings out this power in that most instructive passage in the latter part of the seventh and beginning of the eighth chapters of the Romans, in which the Apostle, having described so vividly the impotence of the man striving in his own strength to keep GOD's law, but constantly failing, baffled and beaten by the strength of sin, and having brought the sin-convicted soul into the depth of despair, till it cries, "Oh, wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" then turns to the triumphant deliverance, and shows that what GOD's law in its weakness could not do, *that* GOD, sending His SON to die for man's sin, did; giving man the victory over sin, and enabling him to fulfil the righteousness of the law, while walking not after the flesh, but after the spirit. O GOD, give Thy poor struggling servants this Divine gift. We

know what is right. We assent to Thy law as good. But though to will is present with us, yet how to perform that which is good we find not. Oh, may Thy HOLY SPIRIT deliver us from the body of this death. May the law of the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS make us free from the law of sin and death. O HOLY SPIRIT, come to us. Come and abide with us. We long for Thy sanctifying power. We long for Thy gracious guidance through the darkness of our earthly journey. "For as many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the sons of GOD." Amen.

THE END





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